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CONTRIBUTORS

WILLIAM TROY, a contributor to *The Nation*, *The Symposium*, and other periodicals, is working on a volume of criticism. His study of D. H. Lawrence in this issue is the second essay in our series on modern literary figures. . . . ELIZABETH BISHOP, a graduate of Vassar College, has contributed verse and prose to *Trial Balances*, *New Letters in America*, *Life and Letters Today*, and other magazines. She is now living in Paris. . . . JOHN DOS PASSOS, author of *1919*, *The Big Money*, and other well-known novels, has contributed to former issues of *PARTISAN REVIEW*. . . . ANDRE GIDE visited the Soviet Union in the summer of 1936. The report of his trip was contained in *Return from the U.S.S.R.*, published by Alfred A. Knopf last year. His new book, *Retouches à mon Retour de l'U.R.S.S.*, from which we are printing excerpts in this issue, was recently published in Paris. It is an answer to the critics of his first report. This is the first time that any parts of it have appeared in America. . . . DELMORE SCHWARTZ, whose story, "*In Dreams Begin Responsibilities*," was published in our last issue, is now at work on a novel and a long poem. . . . ELEANOR CLARK was associate editor of the anthology, *New Letters in America*. She has contributed to *The New Republic* and other periodicals. . . . HARRY LEVIN, a research fellow in literature at Harvard University, has written for *The Nation*, *The Sewanee Review*, and other magazines. . . . MEYER SCHAPIRO, a member of the faculty of Columbia University, is an editor of *The Marxist Quarterly*.

THE LAWRENCE MYTH

William Troy

OF THE many examples of the artist as “suffering hero” thrown up by the 19th century and afterwards (Blake, Hölderlin, Baudelaire, Wagner, Melville, Van Gogh all belong to the tradition), D. H. Lawrence is perhaps the only one who took the next logical step and identified himself overtly with a mystery god. That this is not a conceit but actually what happened in Lawrence’s case is apparent from even the most casual survey of his career. The process was a gradual one, to be sure, and the special aura that surrounds such early heroes as Birken in *Women in Love* and Lilly in *Aaron’s Rod* condenses only by degrees into the unmistakable halo of The Man Who Died. But already in *The Ladybird* (1921) Lawrence had given to one of the most autobiographical of his heroes the name of Dionysius himself. In his poetry this is to be traced out through the change from the rather conventional nature imagery of his early verse to the recondite symbolism of *Last Poems*. The whole process may also be correlated, of course, with the shifting of his intellectual interests from Freudian psychoanalysis to anthropology and comparative religion, from one type of mythology to another and much older one. For most people, however, the most striking evidence will be the biographical: the persecutions and humiliations, the journeys by water, the agonies in the wilderness, the betrayals and final apotheosis at the hands of his disciples. Catharine Carswell, in her account of the burlesque Last Supper at the Café Royal, does not quite explain how Lawrence ever came to lend himself to such a disgusting performance; and if Lawrence is finally forced to advise the editor of the *Adelphi* to wipe away the “Judas slime” the casualness of the implied relationship is rather astounding. But nothing could be more revealing than those last paintings of himself and his family which the British censor was required to bar on the grounds of blasphemy. Because these belong so clearly to biography rather than to art, because they represent self-expression at its most naive and irresponsible, they leave no doubt as to the image of himself which Lawrence came to realize at the end. He had become, as he put it in a deathbed fragment, “like a Lord!” As for his posthumous reputation, a literary analogy is fortunately available and will suffice: the last scene in *Le Rouge et le Noir* in which the lovely

ladies, gathering at Julien's tomb at midnight, join forces in building up a little shrine.

Lawrence is, to a remarkable degree even among contemporaries, a "case," and he has received drastic treatment as such from all quarters. But it is really not helpful to be told by the psychoanalysts that he suffered from one or another malady, or by a theologian like T. S. Eliot that he was possessed of the Devil, or (what perhaps amounts to the same thing) that he was an unfortunate product of the capitalist system. All of these interpretations have their relevance; but none of them quite explains away the phenomenon which, in the first place, has compelled our attention. So much is true for any writer and for any phenomenon, of course, and even leaving aside the matter of special bias every critical approach is limited ultimately by the categories of the thinking mind itself. The problem is always to discover the approach that will do least violence to the object before us, that will reconcile the greatest number of the innumerable aspects that every object presents to the understanding. It merely happens that, in Lawrence's "case," criticism has been more than ordinarily handicapped by a certain difficulty in determining exactly what the object itself really is. Although Lawrence speculated in several fields of knowledge, and contributed many valuable insights, he did not leave a systematic body of thought; yet some people base their approach to him almost exclusively on what they call his ideas. On the other hand, if he is treated as an artist, there is the hard fact to get around that all but a few of his poems and novels are lacking in some of the most prominent features usually associated with works of art. To add to the confusion, if his so-called art is as often as not admired or condemned for its thought, his so-called thought is either accepted or rejected because of the art through which it is expressed. It does not help to draw parallels with Whitman and Melville; for these figures too have been singularly viscous objects for criticism. Perhaps the biographers and memoir-writers have been closest the mark, after all, in almost ignoring Lawrence the thinker and Lawrence the artist for Lawrence the man.

In any case, Lawrence's hold on the contemporary imagination seems to have been as much the effect of his reputation as of his accomplishments; and to say that it was based on the total image presented by his career is perhaps to take everything into account. This is not to dismiss his accomplishments but to put them in their proper relation to something else. "What a man has got to say is never more than relatively important," Lawrence remarks in the *Letters*; and, while this may not be true for everyone, it was true enough for him to suggest an approach that will undertake at least

to describe what it was to which his confused mass of writings may be related. What is here suggested is a view of Lawrence based on the view that he finally came to take of himself, the view of himself as a kind of contemporary reincarnation of the dying god.

Such an approach may seem far-fetched; but no other enables us to reconcile so much of what is admirable and silly, sincere and false, profitable and dangerous in the Lawrence "case." For example, the formlessness of his writings, to which the purely aesthetic critic invariably turns his attention, is immediately seen as not so much a technical deficiency as a function of his role. "They want me to have form," he complained, "that means, they want me to have *their* pernicious, ossiferous, skin-and-grief form." Or, as he put it in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, "As soon as I have a finished mental conception, a full idea even of myself, then dynamically I am dead." How such a dynamic view of the self is to be related to the practice of an objective art is of course the question; and the answer that Lawrence gives elsewhere is unsatisfactory: "One sheds one's sicknesses in books—repeats and presents again one's emotions to be master of them." But as an artist one successfully masters one's emotions only by giving them aesthetic form and Lawrence has already had his say about form. In his handling of the allegory perhaps, he most clearly reveals his predicament; for, if this is the inevitable vehicle for revelation, it also requires the most deliberate manipulation of concepts. But since Lawrence will have nothing of concepts, most of his novels, from *The Rainbow* to *Kangaroo* are allegories whose morals are either confused or postponed. When, in *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, he does for once keep to a simple and consistent pattern the result is significantly the deadest writing of his career. He is at his best when he is most faithful to his rôle—in the apocalyptic passages of the novels, in the "Osiris-cries" of his successive resurrections, in his sermons on the mount. In *The Man Who Died* he wrote a moving and terrible story because he turned from allegory to myth—to the one and only myth to which he had been conforming all along. All of his formal vicissitudes are traceable to the intellectual difficulties in the way of being at once a functioning divinity and a practitioner of the arts. He was not a religious poet, as someone has said, but a self-induced earth god who sometimes wrote verse.

Both in his life and in his works Lawrence illustrates what Nietzsche, in his well-known analysis of the Dionysius myth, calls "the agony of individuation." This will have an unpleasantly metaphysical sound to modern ears; but it must be recalled that to the generation to which Lawrence belonged life still presented itself in terms of metaphysical

problems. To these problems any serious discussion of Gide, Proust, Mann and Joyce must likewise sooner or later be conducted. No matter into what unpopularity metaphysics has fallen, it is the only relevant approach to these writers. So much seems necessary before offering the following interpretation of Nietzsche's phrase: Nature (the undifferentiated flux of phenomena) takes on form; every form involves limitations; and as a result every individual must exist in a state of perpetual inner strife which can be terminated only through dissolution into his original substance. We need not ask what these limitations are, whether there is any less drastic mode of solution, or even whether this is in fact an accurate statement of the problem of being. It will have to be enough to suggest that Lawrence's career was like a ritualistic exhaustion of the paradoxical ambition to enjoy nature, in the sense defined above, and to preserve the character of his individuality at one and the same time.

Nature in Lawrence is commonly supposed to be identified *tout court* with sex; but there are innumerable passages in which it is carefully explained that sex is but the medium or agency of a power still greater than itself. For this reason he is so hard on those who, like Benjamin Franklin, profane it in terms of hygienic "use." Nor is it a pastime for a jaded epoch: "Buy a king-cobra and try playing with that." Contrary to the general belief, Lawrence is more truly moral on the subject of sex than on any other subject. Also it is made clear that sex is not to be considered an end in itself, a solution to the individual problem; this is the thesis of *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. What the power that it represents actually is Lawrence attempts to reveal through a variety of means. In his best poems and novels this power is rendered for us through an interfusion of characterization and description: the early poem "Fireflies" and the scene by the pool in *Women in Love* are examples. Lawrence's specialty as a novelist, it may be noted, is in the recording of such "vibrations." This power is also personified in the familiar little dark man who remains so identical throughout the long roll-call of the novels. But it is perhaps most clearly indicated through the metaphorical light-dark antithesis. By contrast with the world that he rejects Lawrence gives us the sharpest impression of the world that he would put in its place. If the light symbolizes the over-spiritualized, over-intellectualized, and wholly devitalized "white consciousness" of our time, which it should not be difficult for most readers to recognize, the dark can only stand for its opposite—the unspiritual, unintellectual and wholly vital world of nature. The darkness materializes into "the dark gods" and finally "the dark god"; it invests itself in the innumerable forms of dragons, birds, insects, and little black men. But what it really amounts to

throughout is something that no church father would have any difficulty in calling by its right name.

"My great religion," Lawrence wrote, "is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect." This sums up so completely his attitude toward nature that we can pass to his actual handling of the problem of individuality. None of the so-called individualistic writers of recent generations, it may be said, projected the problem with the same deliberation and insistence. "Insofar as he [man] is a single individual soul, he is alone—*ipso facto*. Insofar as I am I, and only I am I, and I am only I, insofar I am inevitably and eternally alone, and it is my last blessedness to know it, and to accept it, and to live with this as the core of my self-knowledge." This is typical of any number of pronouncements on the subject. In the brilliant *Studies in Classic American Literature* the attack is consistently directed against what Lawrence believed to be mankind's reprehensible passion for "merging." All of the novels, as a matter of fact, are object-lessons in the consequences of losing self-identity. In *Sons and Lovers* spiritual love, in most of the other early novels up to *The Rainbow* sexual love, and in *Women in Love* and *Aaron's Rod* friendship between men are successively examined and rejected as a possible means of individual fulfillment. Beginning with *Kangaroo*, however, we get a new and more positive note.

For if Lawrence through his heroes is so jealously defensive of what he calls his "life-form" he exhibits all along an equally strong counter-impulse toward just that sort of "merging" which he condemns in others. The character Aaron replies to the statement in the above paragraph: "But—I can't stand by myself in the middle of the world and in the middle of people and know I am quite by myself, and nowhere to go, and nothing to hold on to. I can for a day or two. But then it becomes unbearable as well." This dialogue between Aaron and Lilly, who represent the two poles of Lawrence's nature, objectifies the conflict by which he was tormented from beginning to end and which was the real source of his astonishing energy. The other side of his eccentric individualism is seen in his life in the febrile quality of his personal relationships and in his numerous projects for a model colony—in Florida, Cornwall, Sicily, Mexico, and again in England. It is interesting that the latter desire seems to have been more powerful than his judgment, for he had been annihilating in his ridicule of the Brook Farm experiment in the book on American literature. Lawrence's social need was so intense that it is not only the main theme of his *Letters* but the motive-power behind them—the reason that he is one of the great English letter-writers. But nothing could be franker than the following confession to Dr. Trigant Burrow: "What ails me is the absolute frustration of my primeval societal instinct. . . . I think

societal instinct much deeper than sex instinct—and societal repression much more devastating. There is no repression of the sexual individual comparable to the repression of the societal man in me, by the individual ego, my own and everybody else's. I am weary even of my own individuality, and simply nauseated by other people's."

Apparently "fulfillment" involves the satisfaction of other needs of man's nature than his purely private sense of communion with the darkness. In the posthumous *Apocalypse* Lawrence begins to make a distinction between the personal and the collective man, but this soon evaporates in a blast of red dragon's breath. Lawrence never really faced the question, for it would have taken him right out of the realm in which the assurances of the blood are sufficient. It would have required intellectual evaluation and moral choice. But we may consider the general solution that he came to offer for the relationships involved in sex, society, and politics. This may be indicated through an inaccurate analogy with the medieval doctrine of grace. Through sex the separate individuals in any relationship are restored to an organic union with the processes of nature; and through this experience they are strengthened, in the best religious sense, both in themselves and in their relations with others. At least this is the only meaning that emerges through the banal conversations and tirades of *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, which belongs late in the Lawrence canon.

Politically, of course, such a doctrine leads straight into the very dark burrow of fascism. But it may be worth while to trace out Lawrence's political development, if it may be called such, a little more carefully. As a coal miner's son, as a suffering artist, and as an intelligent observer of contemporary life, he could never have been very sympathetic to the ideal of modern bourgeois democracy. All of his work is an implicit, and much of it an explicit, criticism of mass-production in ideas, emotions, and men. He was a revolutionist, therefore, in the sense that every Bohemian artist under the bourgeois regime has been a revolutionist. But it does not follow that he could have turned to the Fabian socialism of pre-war England or, later, to Soviet communism. What he objected to in communism was its failure to provide any ideal better than the one to which he had been opposed all along: "The dead materialism of Marx socialism and soviets seems to me no better than what we've got." In *Apocalypse* communism is defined as a power-driven movement in which the proletariat is motivated entirely by the desire for *revenge* on the ruling class. It is "the old will of the Christian community to destroy human worldly power, and to substitute the *negative* power of the mass. . . . In Russia, the triumph over worldly power was accomplished, and the reign of saints set in, with Lenin as chief saint." To Lawrence power, the only real

power, is to be achieved, as we have seen, through identification with nature; he is against the intellectual will expressing itself in any sort of active dogma. But this power would seem to be considerably variable between individual and individual. In such a situation the inferior men must bow down in homage before their acknowledged lords and masters; only in this way will a continuous "stream of life" be maintained. In other words, it is the old medieval hierarchy, with grace (sex) once again thrown in as a safeguard. In *Kangaroo* the fascist labor leader wins the support of his followers only to renounce it because he is still not on good enough terms with "the dark gods." The same notion is repeated in the diffuse and hysterical *Plumed Serpent*. Led into confirmation of a political religion with whose only practical expression he would have been the first to quarrel, Lawrence illustrates the dangerous foolishness of his logic once it is applied.

Only by courtesy of course is it to be called logic at all; here surely it is the blood and not the intellect that is doing the thinking. For sex is not the equivalent of medieval grace, in the sense of being a mode of communication between two absolute orders of being, but something common to both man and nature. Grace was invented by the theologians because it was necessary to establish some bridge between the human and the divine by which man could receive some assistance in controlling the forces of his nature; but in Lawrence sex is indistinguishable from these forces themselves. To attempt to improve human relationships through sex is therefore like attempting to improve nature by lifting it on its own bootstraps. It is an attempt for which Lawrence could have found a discouraging precedent in a much earlier representative of the tortured Anglo-Saxon Protestant mind, who sought "the perfection of nature" only to end his days with a Yahoo babble in his brain. Swift belied human nature by projecting it too purely on its Houyhnhnm side, Lawrence by giving too much scope to its Yahoo side; but both pictures equalize in their common injustice to the reality.

In his remarkable essay on Poe, Lawrence demonstrates how the Western will, become converted into the "will-to-know," turns in on itself and becomes an instrument that ends by destroying its own object, as the hero of *Ligeia* wills the death of his beautiful young wife. It never seems to have occurred to him that his own version of the Schopenhaurian "will-to-live," despite its up-to-date anthropological trappings, could also turn in on itself and blight the very sources of its energy. Yet in a story like *The Ladybird* there is an odd ambiguity in the manner in which the hero, Count Dionys Psanek, vacillates between being a sympathetic avatar of his mythological namesake

and a somewhat sinister emissary of Avernus. In fact, there is something rather sinister about all the little black heroes, and Dionys is selected only because he is the blackest and smallest and most obviously sinister of the lot. A German army officer imprisoned in England, he renews his friendship with a childhood acquaintance, the pale and virginal Lady Daphne, whose husband is away at the war. Through a series of distinctly cruel conversations he manages to persuade her that she is a "whited sepulchre" and that her husband is probably no better. Upon the latter's return, he induces her, through the spell of his singing, to come to his room at night. There he is "seated in flame, in flame unconscious, like an Egyptian King-god in the statues." At first he hesitates but then decides: "Take her into the underworld. Take her into the dark Hades with him, like Francesca and Paolo. And in hell hold her fast, queen of the underworld, himself master of the underworld." He informs her, "In the dark you are mine. And when you die you are mine. But in the day you are not mine, because I have no power in the day. In the night, in the dark, and in death, you are mine."

This talk of intermingled love and night and death—we have heard it all before. Nineteenth century romanticism had been a deathward movement, as Mann shows in his Wagner essay, and through the Nietzsche influence it is simple enough to relate Lawrence back to the sources of Poe, Wagner, Baudelaire, and the other great celebrants of the tomb. Despite the superficial exaltation of birds and beasts and flowers, despite the eloquent stressing of the natural beauty and power in man, his life and work are rooted in an irrepressible yearning for the grave. For to what can this extinction of the daylight world, this abandonment of reason, lead but to a surrender of the finite human self to the infinite nothingness of the flux? For the romantic there is always the moment when Life, with a capital L, must be equated with death; it is the moment when the expanding sense of nature in him causes him to break irrevocably the limitations which alone guarantee his identity. "Rich, florid, loosener of the stricture-knot called life," cries Whitman. "Sweet, peaceful, welcome Death." If this loosening was indeed what had been desired all along, it was of course foolish to talk so big on the subject of life. For if life, human life, is a knot, reason is one of the two controlling cords. To discard reason is to throw over the only thing that can give life definition. Lawrence's program is, in the last analysis, a program for a mystery god—but hardly for a man. And Dionysius in every age can terminate his agony only by dissolving into his native element.

These considerations are so obvious that they would not be

raised if they had not been ignored by Lawrence right up to the end. Toward the last the strain is quite evident in the paintings, poems, and tales, so that as the affirmative note became more emphatic the underlying despair rose more and more to the surface. Like Melville's whale, "life dies sunwards full of faith." Sometimes the longing comes through as clearly as this:

*Life is for kissing and for horrid strife,
The angels and the Sunderers,
And perhaps in unknown Death we perhaps shall know
Oneness and poised immunity.*

But Lawrence's importance is that of a cult-leader, a kind of latter-day mystery god, as we have said, and to disinfect his ideas is not to reduce the objective importance of his myth as a whole. It is perhaps an empty characterization to say that he was, in any case, one of the great personalities of his generation. For the isolated qualities of honesty, courage and intensity there was perhaps not a man in England worthy to touch the hem of his much battered garments. To say that he possessed integrity is to strain the meaning of that term; but we can say that he kept to his rôle with an irreproachable consistency. Even as an artist his least successful organ notes proved more penetrating than the tinny whistles of the Shaws, the Wellses, and the Huxleys. He was a necessary antidote, for the parched young of two continents, to the salty fare of a superior artist like T. S. Eliot both in the latter's wasteland and holy water phases. "Man seeks the perfection of the life or the work," as Yeats has said, and Lawrence's life was very nearly perfect of its kind. It was a perfect example of what it is to be a mystery god in our time.

What then is the value of the Lawrence myth to a generation that is now perhaps far enough removed from it not to fall into the danger of a facile self-identification? It is the value, in the first place, of *any* myth: the vicarious exhaustion of possibilities that are inherent in the human being in every time and place. Lawrence overplayed one impulse of human nature on a scale and in a fashion to stand as a highly moral experience to anyone willing to follow him through to the end. Although he never achieved real tragedy in any of his works, he was himself a tragic figure in a drama that lacks a chorus. To appreciate him, we must try to supply this chorus and the proper language for it. In the second place, his story includes elements that should contribute to a deeper realization both of ourselves and our surrounding world. If we distinguish between its positive and its negative aspects, we must admit that the latter constitute an impression of the contemporary world which no honest and sensitive person

can fail to recognize. As a reflection of the formal and qualitative disintegration of human life at present, it is more compelling than the jeremiads of the reformers, the analyses of the psychologists, or the charts of the economists. Lawrence was not primarily a social critic, as some people have insistently maintained, but his *epos* is a damning criticism not only of our socio-economic organization but of our whole culture to its roots. This is not to say that he was a mere product of this culture; the psychoanalysts can make an equally convincing case along quite different lines. After all, the pattern to which he conformed was something much older even than our culture. It is necessary to make this point very clear because the conclusion must not be, as Lawrence himself insisted, that we can solve everything by an immediate fiat of the intellectual will. Finally, the meaning of his myth is that whatever rational program we do undertake to alter the external situation must take sufficient account of that side of life to which he gave such fanatical allegiance.

In his last years Lawrence was much fascinated by a conception which, if he had lived long enough to develop, might have led to a different solution to his many problems. It is the notion of the Greek "gods of limits," the Dioscouri, or Heavenly Twins, who divided all things between them—earth and sky, Heaven and Hades, the upper and lower regions of consciousness. In *Apocalypse* Lawrence tells us a great deal more about them: they were "witnesses," for example, to Adonai, the lord of life. They were "rivals, dividers, separators, for good as well as for evil: balancers." But, characteristically enough, Lawrence is more impressed by their negative aspect as sunderers or destroyers than as balancers between opposites. To him they seem to appear at successive moments of time rather than simultaneously. They tend to cancel each other out rather than to define the unity of whatever is the organism in which they are present. But to the Greek mind, to which they were above all witnesses to something, their principal function must have been that of definition. From such a brief summary it may or may not be evident how such a notion may be related to the dialectic or process type of thinking, which in its various expressions, is perhaps the characteristic type of thinking of our time. With little difficulty "the gods of limits" can be appropriated to the needs of much modern philosophy, psychology, politics, and science.

For the present discussion they are useful as another restatement of the nature-reason antithesis that has been suggested as the real problem behind the Lawrence myth. If human life is a process that is in turn defined by these two processes, if it is divided between them, it is something that can be supported only if we can imagine at least

temporary states of comparative stability. This solution has points of resemblance both to the Whiteheadian "event" in physics and to Dewey's "equilibrium" in psychology. But the question is always to what extent such a resolution involves a virtual capitulation of one or the other of the contending parties. Lawrence was someone who spent his entire career combatting what he believed was an undue balance in the structure of human life at the expense of the animal nature in man. In his reaction against the scientific rationalism of the latter nineteenth century he undoubtedly plunged himself into the most abject nature-mysticism. But the reaction against Lawrence in turn need not be anything so simple as a renewed assertion of pure scientific rationalism. For scientific rationalism, in any of its current forms or derivatives, does not really provide a resolution of the conflict of which Lawrence's career was the rather sensational rehearsal. Insofar as it is applied to the kind of problems with which he was concerned, it can only lead to an unequivocal victory of the one side of man's nature over the other. It can only lead to a further building up of precisely those structures under which the individual has been buried for centuries. The only real resolution would be a redefinition, in terms of what both man's reason and his nature are at present, of man himself. It may be that such a redefinition may be accomplished within one or another of the available contemporary programs; or it may be that none of these quite avoids falling over into one of the two extremes. But what is certain is that no definition will be satisfactory that does not take into important account all those values to whose defensive assertion Lawrence felt obliged to devote his career.

LOVE LIES SLEEPING

Earliest morning, switching all the tracks
That cross the sky from cinder star to star,
Coupling the ends of streets
To trains of light,

Now draw us into daylight in our beds;
And clear away what presses on the brain:
Put out the neon shapes
That float and swell and glare

Down the gray avenue between the eyes
In pinks and yellows, letters and twitching signs.
Hang-over moons, wane, wane!
From the window I see

An immense city, carefully revealed,
Made delicate by over-workmanship,
Detail upon detail,
Cornice upon facade,

Reaching so languidly up into
A weak white sky, it seems to waver there.
(Where it has slowly grown
In skies of water-glass

From fused beads of iron and copper crystals,
The little chemical "garden" in a jar
Trembles and stands again,
Pale blue, blue-green, and brick.)

The sparrows hurriedly begin their play.
Then, in the West, "Boom!" and a cloud of smoke.
"Boom!" and the exploding ball
Of blossom blooms again,

(And all the employees who work in plants
Where such a sound says "Danger," or once said "Death,"
Turn in their sleep and feel
The short hairs bristling

On back of necks.) The cloud of smoke moves off.
A shirt is taken off a thread-like clothes-line.
Along the street below
The water-wagon comes

Throwing its hissing, snowy fan across
Peelings and newspapers. The water dries
Light-dry, dark-wet, the pattern
Of the cool water-melon.

I hear the day-springs of the morning strike
From stony walls and halls and iron beds,
Scattered or grouped cascades,
Alarms for the expected:

Queer cupids of all persons getting up,
Whose evening meal they will prepare all day,
You will dine well
On his heart, on his, and his,

So send them about your business affectionately,
Dragging in the streets their unique loves.
Scourge them with roses only,
Be light as helium,

For always to one or several morning comes,
Whose head has fallen over the edge of his bed,
Whose face is turned
So that the image of

The city grows down into his open eyes
Inverted and distorted. No. I mean
Distorted and revealed,
If he sees it at all.

ELIZABETH BISHOP

MIGRATORY WORKER

John Dos Passos

IF SOME CRAZY GALOOT had walked up to Ike Hall while he was sitting under the watertank at Ash Forks waiting for them to make up a train of empty ore cars and told him that the first thing he was going to do when he hit Phoenix was get married, Ike would have called him a goddam liar.

Ike Hall felt sick and tired of the whole woman business. He'd been working in a pick and shovel gang on an irrigation project near Needles in a temperature of 110 in the shade, all right for spicks but no work for a white man; his neck was burned till it was like a piece of raw steak, and the hard water had brought back an old dose he'd thought he'd been cured of for years. The foreman had told him about a crackerjack clapdoctor in Phoenix who was part Indian, "and you know, son, the injuns are hell's own physicians," so Ike had drawn his pay and rolled his bundle and hopped a fast eastbound freight on the trunkline. But waiting at Ash Forks he got to feeling sick and feverish; hell, he'd done too much of that in his time, so when a passenger train came along he went to the ticket office and bought him a ticket like a respectable citizen instead of waiting for the empty ore cars they kept shunting back and forth on the siding. Three things he was through with, he told himself as he sat in the smoking car rolling himself cigarette after cigarette from his packet of Bull Durham, were easy women, hopping freights and pick and shovel work.

He got to talking with a sallowfaced guy with a threedays' growth of beard who was dressed in a dusty blueserge suit with dandruff on the shoulders and said he was an electrician on his way from Albuquerque to take a job with the electrical company in Phoenix on account of the big money they were paying. "Doan' know why it is," the guy said, "but there ain't an electrician in the state of Arizona." Just a week before Ike had been helping the foreman wire the new bunkhouse so he decided that maybe he was an electrician too. Ike asked the guy did he think he could get him a job and the guy said sure, anybody could tell by the cut of Ike's jib he was mechanical. "Would he join the union?" said the guy. "Sure, I'm a union man,"

said Ike. "Shake," said the guy. "I'll take you around to see the bird who does the hiring."

That was how Ike met Jinny Connor. He'd been sent out one morning with his toolkit on his shoulder to see what the trouble was with the lights in a row of unpainted bungalows on the dusty hill across the river. In the first of them there was this pale looking girl with big brown eyes and brown curls. She wore a blue apron and was washing dishes in the kitchen. She was shy but mighty civil spoken. First thing Ike did when he started monkeying with the wiring was give himself a shock that just about dropped him to the floor and blew out the main fuse into the bargain. The girl gave a yell when she saw the flash. A hunched old woman with a face that would curdle milk shuffled in from the other room and said she smelt smoke and was he trying to set the house on fire and please to be quiet because the mister was sick in bed. Ike took off his cap and said he was sorry, ma'am, but he'd had to test the insulation. The old woman bawled the girl out for not getting the kitchen cleaned up quicker and shuffled out into the front room again.

Ike's eye caught the girl's and they got to laughing. It took him all day to finish up the job because he had to learn the business as he went along and by the time the job was finished he knew all about her, how her folks were dead and she had to live with her aunt and an uncle who was a lunger and how the old woman drove her like a nigger and how she wanted to run away and get a job waiting in a café only she was scared to. When Ike got back to the office the boss bawled him out for being so long on this one job, but Ike didn't give a damn, he was just figuring how he could fix it to go out there again next day.

He did what the doc had told him about laying off the women until he'd dried him up, although the married women in some of the houses he went to sure did make passes at him. In the old days when he was out looking for it, he'd never known you could get it so easy.

Evenings when Jinny could slip away from the old folks who watched her like a hawk they would meet down at the drugstore at the corner and walk out together, just like brother and sister. Her real name was Virginia. The first time they walked out she put her head on his shoulder and said she trusted him because he was such a cleanlooking boy or maybe because his eyes were blue. He said he guessed he was as much of a bum as the next guy but he knew a nice girl when he saw one.

There wasn't any place they could go because all the hangouts were too tough to take a nice girl like that to, so they would scramble over the rocks and along irrigation ditches in the valley of the Salt

River and stand around listening to the toads singing and looking at the moonlight and kinder hemming and hawing mostly. He did his best to keep his hands off her. Having that dose made him feel awful ashamed.

The minute the doctor said he was cured it was different, but she said, George . . . she'd found out his real name was George and always called him George now . . . she couldn't unless she was married, she didn't know why but that was how she'd been brought up. So before Ike knew what he was doing he'd said they'd have to get married, then, and had bought her an engagement ring for fifteen dollars from a Jew salesman he met in a poolroom.

The old folks raised holy hell when they got wind of it and the old woman called up the sheriff and tried to get Ike arrested but the sheriff must have said the girl was free, white and twentyone and it wasn't the law's business who she married, because the old woman hung up the receiver and ran screeching into the old man's bedroom yelling that he had to throw Ike out of the house. Ike felt sorry for the old geezer when he tottered in with a blanket round his shoulders coughing as he came and waving a big Colt in his shaky blueveined hand. "I guess you folks want me to get out of here," Ike said with a grin and turned and walked out of the house. He never turned around as he walked down the dusty hill towards the bridge but his back sure tickled at the thought of that damned automatic shaking in the old man's hand.

Next morning when he went to work there was Jinny waiting for him outside the shop. He went in and told the boss he had to have a day off to get married and they went right down to the Justice of Peace and took the fatal step. Ike had had the license in his wallet for a week in case he might need it quick.

Jinny said they'd have to go someplace else than Phoenix because she'd be scared all the time on account of her aunt Maggie who she knew was crazy as a hootowl. She said she'd always wanted to go back to Kansas City where she'd been raised when she was little. Ike hated to give up that good job now that he was just beginning to learn something about electrical work but it had to be done. Ike didn't have enough jack to get sleepers so they sat up in the day coach all the way happy and kidding and giggling and holding hands and looking out at the scenery like a couple of schoolkids. "In K. C. we'll settle down and plant ourselves among the weeds," he kept telling Jinny.

Kansas City sure was a mistake. Jinny's folks had all moved away. The electrical workers local wasn't taking in any new members on account of the slump and before Ike could say Jack Robinson there

he was smashing baggage at the Railway Express and Jinny was counter girl in a onearmed lunch. Between them they could only make twenty dollars a week. Every week they changed their furnished room trying to find one that wasn't filthy dirty or didn't have bedbugs. Still Ike was happy. He'd never had a girl all to himself like that. In bed he'd be awful careful not to hurt her; he'd never known he could have a time with a girl night after night like that. She was awful bashful and never let on she knew what they were doing, but she thought the world of him. All day he'd be looking forward to evening when they'd walk around the town a little holding hands before going to bed. Waking up in the morning with her head all rumpled with sleep on the pillow beside his it would give him quite a turn to remember that here he was a married man.

Every week they put a little cash away to get something ahead so that they could pull out and go someplace where Ike could get him a decent job and they could have some kind of a shack to themselves. But when it came on to be the third month and there wasn't any more chance that Jinny wasn't going to have a baby, Ike made up his mind something had to be done real quick.

They sat up half one night in their little hallbedroom whispering. They couldn't talk out loud because every time they raised their voices some bloke next door banged on the wall. Winter was setting in early that fall and their feet and hands were cold and they didn't have enough covers, and they couldn't get to sleep they were so worried. There wasn't a living soul they could call on for help. At last Jinny curled up in the blanket and went to sleep like a baby with the tears still running out from under her eyelashes. Ike sat up in the chair looking at her and wondering what the hell he could do; he had half a mind to walk out on her and hit the road again, but, Jesus, how could a stiff walk out on a nice girl like that who thought the world of him?

Next morning Ike started for work early. His eyes stung and he felt dead tired from not getting enough sleep. The November morning was frosty and he had to step right along because he didn't have any overcoat. Passing the damn fink employment agency on the corner opposite the freight depot he saw a new sign on the bulletin board. HIGH PAY WIDE AWAKE MEN TO LEAVE AT ONCE FOR OILFIELDS. He went in and found they were paying four dollars a day for donkey-enginemens and machinists.

Sure he could run a drill and hadn't he been engineman on that coaster out of Seattle. Right away he felt there was something phoney about the job and the blackjawed onearmed guy named Riley who was in there hiring the crew. "Kin you ship out to Oklahoma tonight?"

"Sure," said Ike. Then he turned red. "I got the missus with me. . . . You'll have to pay her fare too."

He didn't like the look the fink gave him. "A henpecked husband. . . . That's great. . . . That's what we want, good steady married men that won't walk out on us." "Say, Mister Riley, this ain't a scabbin' job, is it?" Riley looked Ike straight in the eye with that nasty look he had. "Take it or leave it," he said. "I've not got time to talk philosophy with nobody."

"All right," said Ike. He went around and resigned at the Railway Express and drew a couple of dollars they still owed him and that night he and Jinny went down to the train. She was carrying a floor lamp she'd won at a shooting gallery and he had their ratty wicker suitcase in one hand and a paper package under his arm. The fink was waiting for them with the tickets.

After he'd settled Jinny in the daycoach he went back to the smokingcar to take a look at the bunch. The minute he saw them he knew it was a scab job, a worselooking bunch of scissorbills he never had seen. They were drinking and yelling and raising cain right there in the smokingcar. Ike felt worse than he'd ever felt in his life, but what the hell could he do? Looked like it was scab money or no money.

He went into the toilet and took out the red card he still carried in his inside pocket and tore it up and dropped it down the johnny. He stood there a minute looking at himself in the cracked mirror. He looked pale and thin and he had circles under his eyes from not sleeping last night but he didn't look very different from how he'd always looked. He looked himself right in the eye and whispered "Ike Hall, you're a married man and a skunk." Then he sat down on the johnny and covered his face with his hands that were sore and rough from baggage smashing in K.C. The train made a cheery racket over the ties in the windy night. Now and then from way up ahead the engine hooted at him. "Just a lousy scabbin' scissorbill."

SECOND THOUGHTS ON THE U. S. S. R.

Andre Gide

THE PUBLICATION of my book, *Return from the U.S.S.R.*, has won me a good deal of abuse. Romain Rolland's part in it pained me. Though I have never had much taste for his writing, his moral character, at least, commands my respect. I was distressed because the incident demonstrated how rare it is for a man to reach the end of his life without having previously reached the limit of his powers. The author of *Above the Battle*, would, I believe, pass a harsh judgment on Rolland grown old. This eagle has made his nest, and there he lies.

Besides the vituperation there were a few criticisms made in good faith. It is to answer them that I am writing this book. . . .

A superficial survey, a hasty judgment, my book has been called. As if it were not precisely on first sight that the Soviet Union is so attractive! As if one did not have to go deeper before catching sight of the worst!

In the heart of the fruit the worm hides. But when I told you this apple of yours was wormy, you accused me of poor vision, or of not liking apples.

If I had been satisfied to be an admirer, you would certainly not have reproached me with superficiality. Then, however, I would have deserved it.

I have met your criticisms before. They are practically identical with those provoked by my *Trip to the Congo* and my *Return from the Chad*. Then I was found fault with on the grounds that:

- (1) the abuses to which I called attention were exceptional and irrelevant;
- (2) there was every reason for admiring the present régime, if one would only compare it to the previous régime, to the days before the conquest (I almost said, before the Revolution);
- (3) everything I deplored had its profound *raison d'être*, which I had not been equipped to understand—was but a temporary evil in anticipation of a greater good.

At that time, the criticisms, the attacks, the abuse all came from the right; and you, adherents of the left, did not for a minute dream of making a to-do about my confessed "incompetence." You were

only too happy to seize upon my statements as long as they fitted in with your ideas, as long as you could make capital of them. And in the same way, today, this incompetence of mine you would never have held against me had I only praised the U.S.S.R., and declared that everything there was going rapturously well.

All of this in no way alters the fact (and this is the only thing that matters to me) that subsequently the commissions of inquiry set up in the Congo confirmed all my observations. So now, the quantity of evidence which keeps coming my way, the reports which I have been able to read, the stories of impartial observers (however great "friends of the Soviet Union" they are, or were before they went there to look at it), together bear witness to the reality of my picture of the Soviet Union, together reinforce my fears for it. . . .

One of the most legitimate objections made to my *Return from the U.S.S.R.* is that it seems to lay too much stress on intellectual questions, which one must be willing to see relegated to second place, so long as other, more pressing problems remain unsolved. The reason for this is that I had felt obliged to include the few speeches I had been persuaded to make in Russia, and which had given rise to some controversy. In such a little book these speeches took up too much space and drew attention to themselves. They date for the most part from the beginning of my trip, from a time when I still believed (yes, I was that naïve) that in the Soviet Union it was possible to speak seriously about culture and to debate straightforwardly, from a time when I did not yet realize how primitive and uncertain the social equilibrium was.

But I protest the attitude which has insisted on regarding what I said as the mere special pleading of a literary man. When I spoke of intellectual freedom, I meant something much more general. Science is compromising itself quite as badly as literature by its complaisance to authority.

Such-and-such a scholar finds himself forced to repudiate a theory in which he believed but which had a not-quite-orthodox look. Such-and-such a member of the Academy of Science disavows "his former errors," since they "were susceptible of being used by fascism"—so he himself has just declared in public (*Izvestia*, December 28, 1936). Such a man is compelled to admit the veracity of charges launched, under orders, by a journal like *Izvestia*, which smells out in his researches the dreadful symptoms of "counter-revolutionary delirium."

Eisenstein is halted in the middle of his work. He must acknowledge his "errors," admit that he has made a mistake and that the new film, which he has been two years getting ready and on

which two million roubles have already been spent, does not measure up to doctrinal requirements, and was therefore quite rightly banned.

As for justice! Do you think that the last trials in Moscow and Novosibirsk are going to make me regret having written that sentence that infuriates you: "I doubt whether in any other country today, even in Hitler's Germany, the spirit is less free, more cramped, more fearful (terrorized), more enserfed"?

I had for three years been too thoroughly steeped in the literature of Marxism to feel very much out of my element in the Soviet Union. Besides I had read too many accounts of trips, enthusiastic descriptions, apologies. My great mistake was that I believed too willingly in the hymns of praise. This was partly due to the fact that everything I came upon which might have put me on my guard was so clearly bad-tempered in tone. . . . I would more willingly trust love than hate. Yes, I subscribed; I had faith. Likewise, in the Soviet Union I was never so much disturbed to find imperfection as I was to encounter straight off the very prerogatives I wanted to get away from, the privileges I hoped were abolished. Certainly, it seemed natural to me that they would try to treat a guest as well as possible, to give him the best of everything. But what amazed me was the enormous disparity between this "best," and the common lot, that such excessive privilege should exist side by side with a mass standard of living so mediocre or so bad.

Perhaps this is an eccentricity peculiar to my mind and its Protestant conditioning, but at any rate I distrust ideas that pay dividends, and "comfortable" opinions; I mean opinions by which the holder can hope personally to profit.

And I can see very well indeed how much the Soviet government stands to gain from doing the handsome thing by artists and writers, by everybody who could possibly sing its praises—though there may be no definite attempt at corruption. But also I see only too well how the writer stands to gain by endorsing the government and a constitution which favors him to this extent. And so at once I am on my guard. I am afraid of letting myself be bribed. The unheard-of profits they offer me in Russia actually terrify me. I don't go to a Soviet Union to rediscover privileges. Those that were waiting for me there were scandalous.

And why shouldn't I say that?

The Moscow newspapers had informed me that in a few months more than 400,000 copies of my books were sold. I leave it to the reader to calculate the author's royalties. And the fat pay for magazine articles! Had I written a dithyramb on the U.S.S.R. and on Stalin, what a fortune would have been mine!

Such considerations could not have made me withhold my praise; no more will they silence my criticism. Yet I confess the extraordinary favoritism (greater than in any other country in Europe) shown to everybody who wields a pen, provided they write grammatically, did more than a little to put me on my guard. Of all the workers and craftsmen of the Soviet Union the writer is by far the most pampered. Two of my traveling companions (each had a translated book on the press) scoured the antique shops, the curiosity shops, the second-hand stores, not knowing how to spend the advance of several million roubles they had just received and which they knew they could not take out of Russia. As for my own case, I could hardly make a dent on an enormous bank-account, for everything there was given me free of charge. Yes, everything, from the trip itself to packages of cigarettes. And whenever I would take out my wallet to settle a restaurant or hotel bill, to pay an account, to buy stamps or a newspaper, the exquisite smile and imperious gesture of our guide would stop me: "You're joking! You are our guest, you and your five companions too."

Indeed I had nothing to complain of during the course of my trip through the Soviet Union, and of all the malicious explanations that were concocted to invalidate my criticisms, the one that tries to pass them off as the expression of a personal dissatisfaction is by far the most absurd. Never before have I traveled in such ostentatious style. If by train in a private car, otherwise in the best automobiles, always the best rooms in the best hotels, the most plentiful and select table-fare. And what a reception I got! What pains were taken! What attentions were paid me! Everywhere cheered, flattered, pampered, fêted. Nothing was considered too good, too exquisite for me. I would have been graceless indeed to have repulsed these advances; I could not; and I retain a marvelous memory of them, and a lively gratitude. But these very favors continually conjured up the idea of privileges, of differences, where I thought to find equality.

When, having escaped with great difficulty from the supervised world of officialdom, I had rubbed elbows with some piece-workers whose earnings were no more than four or five roubles a day, how was I expected to feel about the banquet given in my honor, which I could not avoid attending? An almost daily banquet, where there was such a quantity of hors d'oeuvres alone that one was three times surfeited before starting on the meal proper, a six-course repast which lasted over two hours and left one absolutely stunned. What an outlay! Since I was never allowed to see a bill, I cannot be specific about the cost. But one of my fellow-travelers, well informed about prices, estimates that each banquet must have come to more than 300 roubles

a head with the wines and the liqueurs. Now there were six of us, seven, counting the guide, and there were often as many hosts and guests, sometimes many more.

Throughout the whole trip we were not, properly speaking, guests of the government, but of the rich Union of Soviet Writers. When I think of the expense they went to for us, I doubt whether the gold-mine of my author's royalties, which I now resign to them, can possibly suffice to reimburse them.

Evidently they were counting on a different return from such generous advances. And I think that part of the spite I am conscious of in *Pravda* comes from the fact that I was a rather bad investment.

I insist that there is something tragic in this Soviet adventure of mine. I had come as an enthusiast, I was totally convinced, I was prepared to admire a new world, and they offered me, *as seductions, mind you*, all the prerogatives I abominated in the old.

— But you don't understand, an excellent Marxist told me. Communism is opposed only to the exploitation of man by man; how many times must I tell you that? Once exploitation is ended you can be as rich as Alexis Tolstoy or a great opera singer if only you acquire your fortune by your personal work. In your scorn and hatred for wealth and possessions I detect a very regrettable trace of your early Christian ideas.

— That may well be.

— Which, let me tell you, have nothing in common with Marxism.

— Alas! . . .

As long as man is under the yoke, as long as the repression of socially vicious forces keeps him prostrate, one correctly keeps on hoping for a future flowering of all that he carries in him. One similarly expects great things of children who grow up quite ordinary. One has often the illusion that man in the mass is made up of individuals superior to the rest of humanity. I believe only that he is less spoiled; but money will rot him quickly enough. And look what is happening in the U.S.S.R.: the new bourgeoisie forming there has all the faults of ours. No sooner has it escaped from misery than it scorns the miserable. Avid of all the good things of which it was for so long deprived, it knows how to go about acquiring them and protecting them. "Are these really the people who made the Revolution? No, these are the people who profit from it," I wrote in my book, *Return from the U.S.S.R.* They may be Party members but there is nothing of communism in their hearts.

But the fact is that the Russian people appear to be very happy. I am entirely in accord with the testimony to this happiness made by Vildrac and Jean Pons, whose books on Russia I cannot read without nostalgia. Because, and I too have said so, nowhere except in the U.S.S.R. do the masses of people, the people you meet in the street (at least the young people) the workers in the factories you visit, the crowds who swarm the places for rest, culture, amusement, present so smiling an appearance. How reconcile this appearance with the frightful poverty in which the great masses are plunged?

Those who have travelled widely in the U.S.S.R. tell me that Vildrac, Pons, and myself would have been quickly disenchanted had we quit the big centers and the beaten paths of tourists. They speak of whole districts where misery hits you in the face. And where. . . .

Misery in the Soviet Union is difficult to find. It hides itself like a guilty thing. It cannot attract pity or charity, it is exposed only to scorn. Those who exhibit themselves are those whose well being depends on this misery. When one does come across numbers of people who are obviously starving, they are smiling too, and their happiness, as I said, is made "of confidence, ignorance, and hope."*

If everyone we see in the Soviet Union appears to be spirited, it is equally true that anyone who has the audacity to lack spirit is immediately suspected. It is extremely dangerous to be sad, or to indicate that you are sad. A complaint cannot be lodged in Russia—it goes to Siberia.

Russia is prolific enough not to show the terrible depredations among her human herds. These ravages are all the more terrible for being hardly noticeable. And those who disappear, who are spirited away, are very likely the most worthy, if not with respect to their practical capacity then in so far as they dare to disagree, differ, distinguish themselves from a mass which insures its unity only by means of a mediocrity which becomes more and more ignoble.

In the Soviet Union what is called "opposition" is in reality courageous criticism, freedom of thought. Stalin demands applause

* It is necessary to remark once more on the Russian people's prodigious capacity for life. Astonished at having endured inconceivable vicissitudes, having suffered so greatly without being diminished by suffering, Dostoyevsky attributed to himself the "vitality of a cat." A love of life which conquers pain as readily as indifference or apathy, a welling up of amusement and lyricism, of unexplained, inexplicable joy; no matter when, where, how. . . . I shall have to call it an extraordinary propensity for happiness. And in spite of everything. It is this quality which makes Dostoyevsky so representative of Russia. It is this quality which attracts me so profoundly and fraternally, and which, through him, directs me to the whole Russian people. It is doubtful whether any other people would have given themselves so generously to so tragic an experience.

and treats those who do not join in as enemies. Often enough it happens that Stalin adopts as his own some measure suggested by somebody else; but first, the better to appropriate the proposal, he gets rid of the proposer. This is Stalin's way of being right. So that very soon he shall find himself surrounded exclusively by men who can hardly annoy him with critical ideas since they shall have no ideas at all. Such is the traditional fate of despots: to be surrounded not by values but by an empty servility.

Whatever the issue which brings before any Soviet court workers of any category, whatever the justice may be of the workers' cause, where is the lawyer who will dare defend them if the rulers have decided on condemnation?

And the thousands deported . . . those who have not bowed in the way prescribed.

I do not have to imagine myself in their boots as M., the other day, was saying, "The devil! It could happen to me, too. . . ." These victims I see, I hear, I feel right near me. It is their gagging cries which wake me in the night; it is their silence which today dictates these lines. Because I have dreamed about these martyrs I have had to write words against which you protest, and whatever assistance my book can bring them means far more to me than all the praises and imprecations of *Pravda*.

Nobody intervenes on their behalf. All the right-wing journals simply exploit their fate to censure a regime which the reactionaries detest; the Barbusses and Rollands, those who love liberty and justice, who fight in behalf of men like Thaelmann, are silent; around the martyrs to criticism the immense proletarian mass is blind.

But when I become indignant, you explain (and still in the name of Marx!) that these definite and undeniable evils (I refer not only to the deportations but also to the profound poverty of the workers, the enormous disproportion of incomes, the reconstituted privileges, the furtive reestablishment of classes, the liquidation of Soviets, the progressive liquidation of everything conquered by 1917) you show great skill in explanations as you point out that these evils are inevitable, and that you yourself, as an intellectual inured to the contradictions (the sophistries) of the dialectic, regard the evils as provisional pauses on the road to a greater good. You, the intelligent communist, know of these evils and deem it best to hide them from those who, being less intelligent than yourself, are very likely to disapprove. . . .

I cannot prevent people from finding my writings useful to them, and if I could I should not want to do so. But to write anything at all in the direct interests of a particular political party—no, that I cannot do. I warned my new Communist friends at the very beginning of our relations: I would never be a satisfied recruit, a recruit to repose.

I have read a statement somewhere to the effect that “intellectuals” who come over to communism ought to be regarded by the Party as “unstable elements” useful on occasions but not entirely to be trusted. How true, how very true! I said the same thing many times to Vaillant-Couturier; but he would not believe it.

There is no party which can keep my loyalty—which can prevent me from preferring truth to the Party itself. When falsehoods intervene I am ill at ease; my role is to denounce them. I attach myself only to truth; if the Party rejects truth then I must reject the Party.

I know well (and you have instructed me often enough in this matter) that from the “Marxist point of view” Truth does not exist; at least not in an absolute sense; that there are only relative truths; but it is precisely these relative truths which are here in question; which you falsify. And I believe that in questions of such weight and import one only deceives oneself by seeking to deceive others. For whom are you fooling now? Those you pretend to serve: the people. One serves the people ill by blinding them.

It is necessary to see things as they are, not as one would have liked them to be:

The U.S.S.R. is not what we hoped it would be, what it gave promise of being, what it still tries to appear to be; it has betrayed our hopes. If we do not want our hopes to fail too, we must attach them elsewhere.

But we shall not turn our face from you, O glorious and grieving Russia. If first you were an example to us, now, alas! you show in what engulfing sands a revolution can sink.

THE BALLAD OF THE CHILDREN OF THE CZAR

1

The children of the Czar.
Played with a bouncing ball,

In the May morning, in the Czar's garden,
Tossing it back and forth;

It fell among the flowerbeds,
Or fled to the north gate.

A daylight moon hung up
In the western sky, bald white.

Like Papa's face, said Sister,
Hurling the white ball forth.

2

While I ate a baked potato,
Three thousand miles apart,

In Brooklyn, in 1916,
Aged two, irrational.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt
Was an Arrow Collar Ad.

O Nicholas! Alas! Alas!
My grandfather coughed in your army,

Hid in a wine-stinking barrel
For three days in Bucharest,

Then left for America
To become a king himself.

3

I am my father's father,
You are your children's guilt,
In history's pity and terror
The child is Aeneas again,
Troy is in the nursery,
The rocking horse is on fire,
Child labor! the child must carry
His fathers on his back!
But seeing that so much is past,
And that history has no ruth
For the individual
Who drinks tea, who catches cold,
Let anger be general:
I hate an abstract thing.

4

Brother and sister bounced,
The bounding, unbroken ball,
The shattering sun fell down
Like swords upon their play,
Moving eastward among the stars
Toward February and October.
But the May wind brushed their cheeks
Like a mother watching sleep,
And if for a moment they fight
Over the bouncing ball,
And sister pinches brother,
And brother kicks her shins,
Well! the heart of man is known:
It is a cactus bloom.

5

The ground on which the ball bounces
Is another bouncing ball,

The wheeling, whirling globe
Makes no will glad.
Turning in its clouded darkness,
It is too big for their hands.
O pitiless purposeless Thing,
Arbitrary and unspent,
Made for no play, for no children,
But chasing only itself.
The innocent are overtaken,
They are not innocent,
They are their father's fathers,
The past is inevitable.

6

Now, in another October
Of this tragic star,
I see my second year,
I eat my baked potato,
It is my buttered world,
But poked by my unlearned hand,
It falls from the highchair down,
And I begin to howl,
And I see the ball roll under
The iron gate which is locked.
Sister is screaming, brother is howling,
The ball has evaded their will.
Even a bouncing ball
Is uncontrollable,
And is under the garden wall.
I am overtaken by terror
Thinking of my father's fathers
And of my own will.

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

ART CHRONICLE: *Hans Arp*

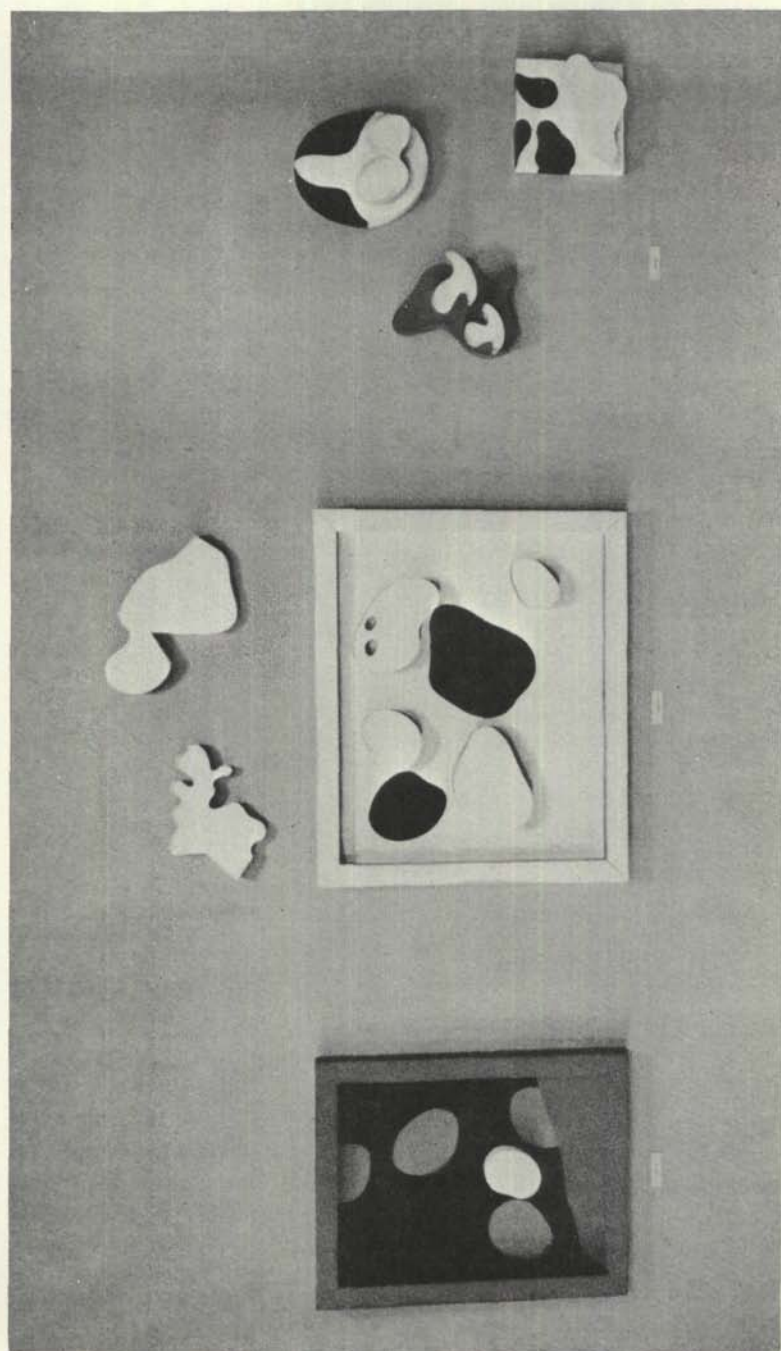
THERE ARE probably many reasons, social as well as aesthetic, why the New York critics should have ignored the most interesting and important event on the current art-calendar. A large Hans Arp exhibition was held at the Museum of Living Art during the month of November; yet only two mentioned that it was taking place, and none gave the slightest indication of having been there.

The extent of Arp's achievement had been difficult previously to appreciate in America. The Museum of Modern Art has displayed his work magnificently; but the approach was historical, and there was only one work later than 1930. The Museum of Living Art, on the other hand, emphasizes the final fruition; of the eighteen works on display there are none *earlier* than 1930. And the leading feature is the first showing anywhere of the new 1937 *papier collé* series.

The name of Arp is probably most familiar as one of the founders of Dada at Zurich in 1916. The Dada movement was for Ernst, Picabia, and others, the end of an aesthetic road from which they took off toward various literary extremes. For Arp on the other hand it was a starting-point in a long way backward, and his subsequent career has been a constant search for an ever greater expressiveness through simplification. Along the way Arp's influence has gripped whole sections of the modern movement to an extent that few, perhaps, have realized. It has been through his renewed emphasis on form, shape, and (particularly) position of shape, that Arp has cleared an approach for his contemporaries. He has attacked the very roots of that language which the painter must have under complete control if he can ever hope to raise his voice without a strain. The fine Miro *Compositions* of 1933 would have been impossible without the researches of Arp; Picasso, Léger, Braque (who had earlier influenced Arp in turn) and countless younger painters and sculptors, incorporate his work into their consciousness.

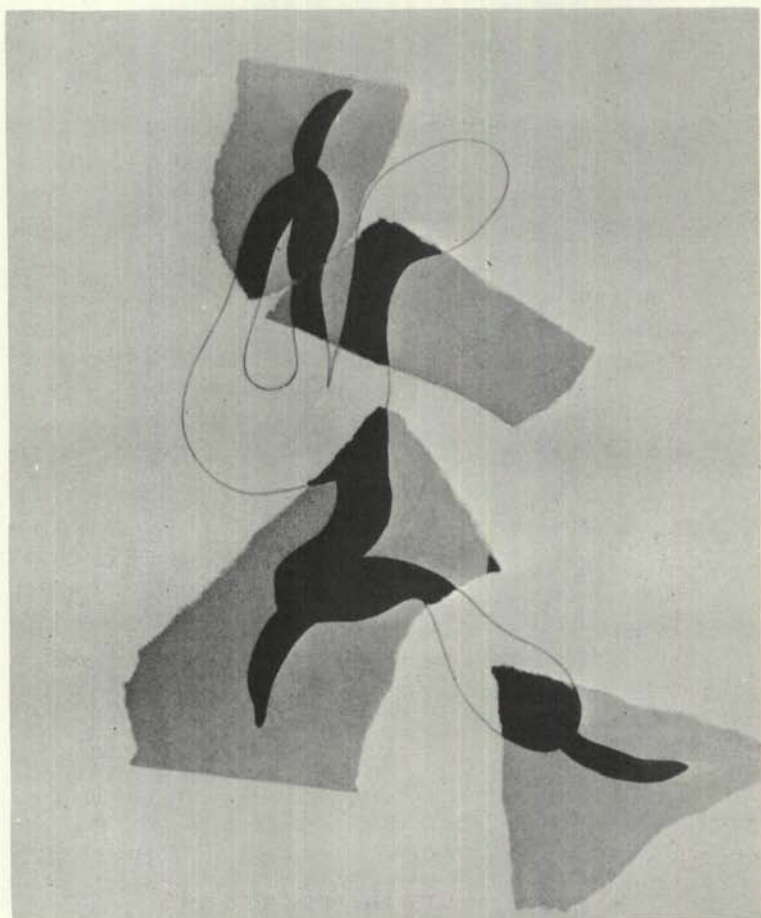
It is the recent *papier collés*, however, that give the exhibition its final importance. Several other contemporary artists might achieve a formidable impact through a retrospective show; but the segregation of their recent works would invariably betray a falling off in quality. Arp is the exception. In the reliefs of 1930-35 the accent and the aesthetic system have become firmly realized. He has laid the foundation and can turn anew to the intensification of quality. With complete sureness the emotion deepens; and the voice is never in danger of becoming forced. Surely the simplest means will ultimately be found adequate for a genuine aesthetic tone. A broken piece of pottery will often bring us closer to Greece than the Laocoön. Some day it may appear that among the purest and most authentic comments on the post-War Europe we may find these elusive and reticent compositions of Arp.

GEORGE L. K. MORRIS



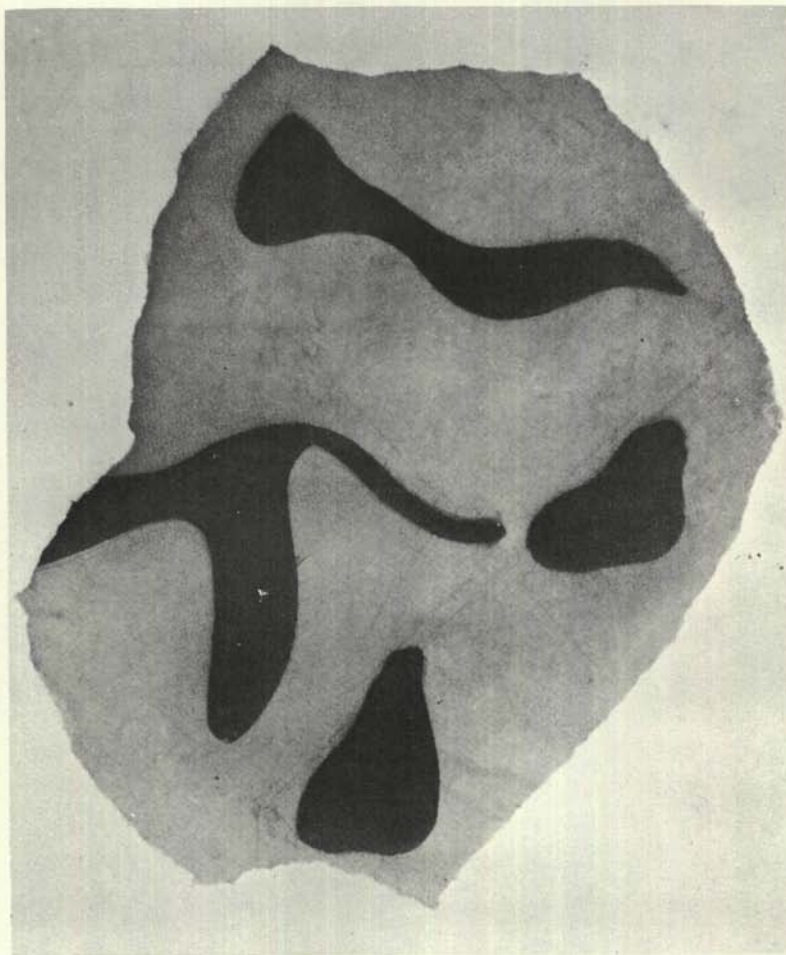
MUSEUM OF LIVING ART, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Hans Arp Exhibition, Wood Reliefs



HANS ARP; Papier Collé 1937

Collection, Museum of Living Art, New York University



HANS ARP; Papier Collé 1937

Collection, Museum of Living Art, New York University

HURRY, HURRY

Eleanor Clark

NO ONE WAS THERE when the house began to fall. It was a beautiful June day, warmer than it had been. I remember that people had been particularly expansive that morning as after a thunder storm. They had gathered on the porch steps at mail-time, exclaiming over and over on the warmth of the sun and the color of the tiger-lilies that had just sprung out all over town. One of the ladies, receiving a long-awaited letter from her nephew, had suddenly become very witty and had kissed everyone in the store, and this could never have happened on an ordinary day. Naturally it occurred to no one that a disaster was about to take place.

The only creature that might have given some warning was the French poodle, de Maupassant, who had been locked in the house and should have sensed that everything was not quite right, but he gave no sign of life until the end. Probably my mother had spoiled him too much by that time. Certainly she loved the dog, especially since the accident that paralyzed one of his paws, so that it was hard for her to deny him anything. People laughed at her for this, and she laughed at herself, but she could always find something in him to excuse her behavior. She loved the aristocracy of him, the way he tossed his luxurious black mane—Louis Quatorze she called it—or drew his shoulders a little together and pointed up his slender glossy snout. In the evening he snuggled at her feet, and then, though in the daytime her profile was too sharp and her green-flecked eyes leapt too quickly to the defense, there was something almost of a madonna in my mother's face. But she had spoiled the dog. In the end he was incapable of serious thought and must have played or slept through the whole catastrophe. The servant spent most of his time writing love letters to the village saxophonist.

I too was of no use, partly because I was walking on the hill about half a mile from the house. The other reason is simply that I was not interested. Later when I saw all my mother's property tumbling to ruin I did try to concentrate on the tragedy of it: shook myself, rubbed my arms and legs, even kicked my shins and jumped up and down as if my feet were asleep, but with no effect. I spent the entire time—two or three hours it must have been—under a maple tree, and rescued nothing but one silver-backed hand mirror which

fell out of an upper window and happened to land in my lap. I think that I was also the last person in the village to be aware that the house, where I was born and spent most of my childhood, was beginning to collapse. I noticed it quite by accident from the hill. The house was swaying very gently, the top of the cobblestone chimney with a graceful and independent motion, rather like the tail of a fish, and the foundations with a more irregular ebb and swell as if the stones were offering a futile resistance to their downfall. The kitchen ell and the woodshed had already gone down, tearing an ugly wound in the north wall and leaving the servants' quarters exposed.

Naturally I made my way back as quickly as possible, but the lane had become so overgrown with sumach and brambles that it was almost half an hour before I reached the road. By that time the whole town was present and the lawn was already clotted with little groups of people (in one place the ladies of the Altar Guild, in another the three families that lived off the town, and so on) debating the causes of the collapse and the possibilities of doing something about it. My mother was running from one group to another, shaking hands with everyone, receiving advice and expressions of sympathy. She had been at a cocktail party and cut an especially charming figure, with her white picture hat and her flowered print. So much so that for some time—until the front wall actually began to bulge out over the lawn, like a paper bag slowly surcharged with water—most of the people were unable to keep their minds on the disaster and acted as if they were attending an ordinary funeral or tea.

Now and then my mother paused in her rounds as hostess, tucking the minister's arm under hers, and while appearing to cast down her eyes, with one of her green calculating upward Victorian glances managed to caress his face. "Ah Padre," she sighed, plucking at the black cloth under her fingers, "what a good friend you are," and added, turning to the church ladies, "He's the best Democrat any of us has ever seen." The minister, who had also been at the cocktail party and whose cheeks were somewhat flushed, gazed with sly benevolence over his flock, laughed his deep-bellied indifferent laugh, and kissed my mother's hand. "Ha ha ha," rattled the church ladies, and with one motion, as from a released spring, began to run in tiny circles around him, pointing delightedly at his full chest and the rather uncouth vigor of his jaw. "Always joking," said the minister, "here her house is on the verge of collapse and she talks about democracy! What a woman!" At this the church ladies could no longer control themselves, they rolled and pivoted with laughter, poking each other's corsets and smacking their lips enviously toward my mother. "It's true, upon my word it's true!" she cried, one arm to

the sky. "He treats us all the same, rich and poor alike! Here's to Padre!" and she raised her empty hand still higher in a toast. "The best friend this community has ever had!"

In the meantime the disintegration of the house was becoming more and more apparent. From the upstairs bedrooms, and even in the pantry and dining-room, beams could be heard falling, and already a wide crack was beginning to open diagonally across the front living-room wall, exposing the dust-covered leaves of books, first the historical works and later the vellum-bound editions of Dante, Baudelaire and Racine. It was this, I think, that first awoke my mother to a real awareness of what was happening. It was not only that the books were threatened with destruction: it was also obvious to everyone that their pages had not been cut. Even the town servants noticed it, even Myrtle who was hired for the lowest and heaviest form of cleaning, but Myrtle was a poor half-deformed creature and she would not have dared to smile behind her fingers as the others did.

One by one the books fell among the barberry bushes, raising a cloud of greyish powder so stifling that the people nearest were forced to stumble back over the flowerbeds, holding handkerchiefs to their mouths. "Oh good Lord! the books! the books!" my mother gasped. She ran up under the crack in the wall, and holding her white hat with one hand, with the other attempted to catch the volumes as they toppled from their shelves. But they were coming too fast. Many of them, too, fell apart immediately against the outer air, leaving only something like silica dust midway to the ground, so that my mother was soon taken with a violent fit of coughing. At last, reeling and choking under the rain of classics that were now striking her head and breasts and shoulders, she was obliged to stagger back toward the road. "A wonderful woman," the ladies said, and they began to scamper to and fro, picking little bunches of sweet william, wild roses and delphinium for my mother's hair. Gratefully she closed her eyes and was nestling her grey curls more warmly against the Padre's ample lap, when the cobblestone chimney tore itself loose from the main beams of the house and crashed through the lower branches of the elms and across the lawn.

Immediately my mother sprang up.

"George! Burt! Albert!" she called. "Somebody's got to save my things! Where's the Fire Department? Fire Department!" The Fire Department was not really a department at all, but a group of farmers who no longer farmed, so they had nothing better to do than to jump on the fire engine as it went by. They were now lying on the grass passing around a bottle of beer and laughing at some story or joke. "George!" my mother wheedled. "Albert! Burt!" and she ran

from one to another, prodding and kicking them with her white pointed toe. The firemen looked up slowly at the waving roof and the colonial columns which were beginning to bend like wax candles in the sun, then hoisting their quids all together to the other side of their faces they announced, "It ain't a fire," and lay down again, covering their necks against the afternoon sun. "But the highboy!" my mother cried. "The highboy! It belonged to my grandfather, it's been in my family for two hundred years, my little old Aunt Mary left it to me in her will. She was so weak she could hardly hold up her head, and she whispered to me"—here my mother's voice broke—"she said, 'I want you to have it, because it's the loveliest thing I have, and you're the only one that's stood by me all these years.'"

This recital so moved my mother that for a full minute she stood with her face in her hands, sobbing, but perceiving that she had still had no effect on the Fire Department she whipped away the last traces of her grief and turned to hunt out Cedric the servant. Cedric, however, was in no condition to be called upon. The collapse of the kitchen ell, taking with it the entire outer wall of his room, had revealed him stark naked playing pinochle with one of the summer residents, an incident that he was now trying to explain to the saxophonist. "Cedric!" my mother shouted. "Come here at once!" But just then a shutter fell on Cedric from the attic window and with a moan he dropped to the ground, followed by his friend. Fortunately my mother was spared this scene. She had just remembered de Mau-passant and was threatening to run into the house for him when she was assured that someone had seen someone taking him away.

In the end it was Myrtle who went in for the highboy. She was not at all anxious to go, even cried a little when it was first suggested, which was rather a surprise because everyone knew that her life was not worth anything. She had lost four fingers in a meat-chopper, so perhaps it was the pain she was afraid of, or the noise: it was hard to tell. At any rate, as soon as she heard that the Selectmen had chosen her for the job she began to whimper and for several minutes stood twisting her fingers in her apron, made out of an old pair of bloomers my mother had given her, and chewing her hair. "Oh no," she muttered to herself, "you don't see *me* going in there"—she had the habit of talking to herself while she worked, even told herself long stories sometimes as she cleaned out the toilets—"Not me, nossir! They come up to me all together and they says, 'Now Myrtle,' they says, 'you just run along in there and bring out that hairloom. 'Tain't as heavy as it looks,' they says, kind of coaxing-like, 'and mind you don't smash it on the way out.' I like that! Mind you don't smash it, they says, on the way out! And there was the whole house rolling

around and a crack in the front big enough to drive a Ford through. Why you could watch the ceiling come down in the parlor, and all the upstairs furniture coming down too, bang! bang! bang! Mind you don't smash it, they says, on the way out! And do you want to know what I said?" Myrtle placed her crippled hands on her hips and with her eyes fiercely lit up she went on, raising her voice to a scream in order to hear herself above the splintering and crashing of the house. "I says to them, 'No!' I stood right up to them and I says, 'I ain't going into that house, not if you give me a million dollars I ain't! And as for what I think of *you* . . . Yes," her lower lip began to twitch and her voice dropped suddenly, "as for what I think of you. . . ." But she was now surrounded by all the important people in town, including my mother, the minister, and the school-teacher—a tiny knifish man with a cone-shaped head and glasses—and realizing that she had been overheard she was taken by a fit of trembling and was unable to go on. "I just got the habit of talking to myself," she apologized, letting out a choked laugh, and then she began to cry again, with her head hanging and her red stubs pressed into the hair over her eyes.

"I have no sympathy with any of them," said the school-teacher. "They ought to be horse-whipped, they don't want to work." He strode through the crowd, receiving with a wrinkling of his beagle's nose their murmurs of agreement, tore off a stout black cherry switch and with little nasal shouts, like a cheer-leader, began to slash at Myrtle's ankles. "Oh mercy," said Cedric. He giggled a little, then with a sob turned back to hide his face. "Oh darling," he moaned, waving his fingers in the direction of Myrtle who was now hobbling toward the doorway, "It has such dreadful feet!"

My mother was not wholly in sympathy with the school-teacher's tactics. She pushed her arm under Myrtle's, and half dragging, half comforting her, pressed a dollar bill between her thumb and what was left of her forefinger. "I want you to take this, my dear, and get yourself something pretty." Without raising her eyes Myrtle took the money and poked it in her shoe.

In the doorway a new difficulty arose, the columns and the door-frame itself having already collapsed, leaving only an irregular space no bigger than the entrance to a small kennel for Myrtle to pass through. However several white-flanneled husbands now sprang into action, lifted Myrtle over the debris on the stoop, and twisted and heaved her head first into the hall. In less than a minute there was nothing to be seen of her but one soleless shoe with the crisp corner of a dollar bill sticking out at the side. "It seems rather a pity," the minister murmured, looking at my mother. "Yes," she hesitated.

"Poor dear Myrtle, she's such a pitiful little creature really and she has so little. . . . But of course I can make it up to her." She smiled, grabbed the dollar, and with a hidden ladylike gesture forced it into the Padre's reluctant hand. "For the new altar cloths," she whispered. "I have so little these days, but this much I *can* do for the community."

For almost half an hour Myrtle fought her way through the wreckage inside the house, trying to reach the highboy in the downstairs guest-room. From time to time we could see her face in an upstairs window, perspiration dropping from her hair, or her arm through one of the cracks that were now widening on every wall. "Hurry!" my mother shouted, with increasing anger as one by one her treasures—a Russian ikon, the Dresden china coffee cups, the Renaissance desk brought so tenderly from Florence—fell and were crushed. "Hurry up, Myrtle! Hurry up! Hurry up!" And every time a part of Myrtle came into view the school-teacher's eyes brightened and he danced back and forth cracking the black cherry whip above his head. "She's a good worker but terribly slow," the ladies agreed, twisting their handkerchiefs and criticizing Myrtle's progress through the house. Some of them, the old New England stock, filled the time more usefully: dusted the grass and bushes where the books had fallen and arranged those that had remained intact in neat piles along the flagstone walk.

During this time the front of the house had been bellying more and more out toward the lawn so that it was no longer possible to see into the guest-room. "It's gone!" my mother cried. "Ah, Padre!" and she leaned against the minister. But a moment later Myrtle appeared again, this time on all fours, crawling up the circular staircase with the highboy on her back. "Bring it down! *Down*, Myrtle!" All the downstairs exits, however, were blocked: the lower half of the staircase too was caving in, leaving Myrtle hanging by two fingers while with the other hand she struggled to keep the massive piece of furniture from slipping back into the pit. Now and then over the sounds of falling timber we could hear her groaning and crying out, "Oh Holy Virgin, help. . . . Oh blessed mother of God. . . ." Then the whole front of the house squeezed down slowly, and we heard nothing more but the breaking of beams and an underground commotion of water as heavy objects fell through to the cellar.

The next and last time that we saw Myrtle she was trying to reach one of the attic windows, still struggling under what must have been a part of the highboy, though it was bashed to a skeleton. Her face was dreadfully distorted, as if she had been pinned under some heavy weight and in freeing herself had pulled her features half off.

Of her nose there was nothing left but a bloody splinter of bone, and her chin, which had been rather underhung, now stuck out in sharp diagonal, forcing her mouth into an enormous grin. Yet in spite of this it seemed as if she were trying to smile, perhaps out of pride in having salvaged as much as she had. She kept pointing at the mahogany ruin on her back, nodding continually and working her mangled features in an effort at communication. "I can't bear it," Cedric said, "they oughtn't to allow such things," and he turned yellow and vomited in a patch of lilies. Everyone else was shouting at Myrtle—"Don't throw it!" "Wrap it in a blanket!" "Let it down here!"—but she had suddenly let go her load. Even from the ground one could see the wild look that came into her eyes, a brilliant hatred aimed down at the crowd. Yet perhaps there was some confusion in it too, for before the wall crashed her face changed again—for a moment she resembled a small wounded animal crying for its life—and she fell with her torn-off wrists lifted up in prayer.

The rest of what happened was so sudden that I have no clear recollection of it. I remember that shortly after Myrtle's death the ladies set to gathering flowers again and made a kind of tiny monument of them on the grass, with POOR MYRTLE written in English daisies across the top. The school-teacher scoffed at this, saying there might have been some sense to it if she had done what she was sent for, but the general opinion was that the ladies had been very kind to think of such a thing. "She was very bitter," the minister said, "but a good soul too," and he took the carnation from his buttonhole and tossed it on the mound.

I think it was at about that time that the French poodle suddenly clawed its way up to the window of my mother's bedroom, the only part of the house that was still standing. Yapping and rolling his eyes he perched on the swaying sill, his bandaged paw held up and a large drop of yellow liquid rolling down his aristocratic nose. "Moppy! Moppy!" my mother cried, running up under the wall. "Did you think your mummy had forgotten you? Oh Moppy you did, you're crying! he's crying," she repeated, almost crying herself. "He thought I was going to leave him there all by himself. Come to me, my darling, come to your mummy, jump!" I remember the two of them that way: the dog afraid to jump, tossing his ruff and his long silken ears, and my mother in a new flowered print and a picture hat, holding up her arms, with an expression of love, almost—I thought at that moment but I am not sure now—almost a look of fulfillment in her face, which at times made one think of a madonna though the profile was too sharp. And then the last of the house fell and buried them.

KENNETH BURKE and SIDNEY HOOK:

An Exchange

IS MR. HOOK A SOCIALIST?

YOU HAVE allowed me two thousand words in which to answer Hook's review of my book *Attitudes Toward History* in the December issue of *PARTISAN REVIEW*. My problem, in its simplicity, is this: Hook has so framed his report of the book's contents as to attack a work that doesn't exist—and I am invited to waste my time and your readers' time by answering this attack upon a work generated in Hook's not very inventive fancy. To carry on a long, minute, point-by-point altercation of the "I did not—you did so" sort would be a bore. I know, because I have already written a 3,200-word reply of this sort.

There is a preponderant area of my book concerned with the psychology of art. Hook, as his published work gives ample evidence, has never paid attention to such matters. Accordingly, in his review, he passes over this material completely.

This material, as Hook aptly says, deals with "attitudes toward life—anytime, anywhere." But I also attempt extending or projecting my analysis of art, to show its bearing upon the analysis of social relations in general. It is a couple of such extensions that Hook completely misrepresents by the rudimentary expedient of refusing, in his report, to realize for his readers the context from which they are drawn.

My general perspective is pro-socialist, anti-capitalist. I believe that moments of crisis, or transition, provide the best entry into an understanding of cultural processes—and that a socialist perspective is the handiest from which to approach such moments, both for diagnostic and hortatory purposes. *Attitudes Toward History* attempts to motivate this choice of perspective by giving, as far as I am able, evidence of the perspective's scope and relevancy. Naturally, I cannot answer with much profit an attack that doesn't even consider the book from this standpoint.

The readiest way I can see, to convey the general tenor of my concerns, is to quote at some length a passage that Hook quotes misleadingly. I shall let him set his own rules for the contest. I shall, that is, pass over without discussion the core of my book (an analysis of symbolism, and of the relation of symbolism to reality, as revealed in such art forms as tragedy, comedy, satire, propaganda, burlesque). I shall simply take one of my "projections" from this field into the general field of social relations:

"Gide has said somewhere that he distrusts the carrying-out of one

possibility because it necessarily restricts other possibilities. Call the possibilities "imaginative." And call the carrying-out of *one* possibility the *bureaucratization* of the imaginative. Some imaginative possibility (usually at the start Utopian) is bureaucratized when it is embodied in the realities of a social texture, in all the complexity of language and habits, in the property relationships, the methods of government, production, and distribution, and the development of rituals that reenforce the same emphasis.

"It follows that, in this "imperfect world," no imaginative possibility can ever attain complete bureaucratization. Even capitalism, as Sombart has pointed out, has not attained its "ideal" perfection. Capitalism would not be ideally perfect until we had a monetary equivalent for everything, until every last bit of material exchange among friends were done for profit, until every casual greeting were given at a price (and that price as high as the traffic would bear).

"In bureaucratizing a possibility, we necessarily come upon the necessity of compromise, since the human being is not a complete fit for *any* historic texture. A given order must, in stressing certain emphases, neglect others. A bureaucratic order approaches the stage of alienation in proportion as its "unintended by-products" become a stronger factor than the original purpose. The heightening percentage of alienation corresponds with an intensification of class struggle because, at the point where the accumulation of unintended by-products is becoming impressive and oppressive, there will be a class of people who have a very real "stake in" the retention of the ailing bureaucratization. From this you get a further alienation—as the dispossessed are robbed even of their spiritual possession, their "right" to be obedient to the reigning symbols of authority.

"Obedience to the reigning symbols of authority is in itself natural and wholesome. The need to reject them is painful and bewildering. The dispossessed struggle hard and long to remain loyal—but by the nature of the case, the bureaucratic order tends simply to "move in on" such patience and obedience. Eventually, sectarian divergence becomes organized (as thinkers manipulate the complex forensic structure, to give it a particular emphasis in one direction). But those in possession of the authoritative symbols tend to drive the opposition into a corner, by owning the priests (publicists, educators) who will rebuke the opposition for its disobedience to the reigning symbols. The opposition abandons some of the symbolic ingredients and makes itself "ready to take over" other symbolic ingredients.

"Insofar as it can unite in a new collectivity, progressively affirming its own title to the orthodoxy, tendencies toward the negativistic, satanistic, sectarian, disintegrative, and "splintering" fall away. But insofar as its own imaginative possibility requires embodiment in bureaucratic fixities, its necessary divergences from Utopia become apparent.

"Many persons who scorn the very name of Utopia become wounded as the "imperfect world" of bureaucratic compromise is revealed. They

are simply Utopians-scorning-the-name-of-Utopians. At other times, the doctrines of *Zweck im Recht* is required to understand their policies. By this doctrine, we are advised to "discount" the face value of their statement by noting what "interests" it protects. The principle of the discount advises us to note that many advocates of socialism, for instance, can gain asylum for their views by interlarding their appeal with attacks upon Russia. Thereby they can advocate an unpopular philosophy by "sharing" with their audience the usual capitalist aversions. They need not be hampered by the realistic problems involved in the "bureaucratization of the imaginative." In explicitly condemning Utopianism, they can conceal from both their auditors and themselves the underlying Utopian pattern of their thought.

"We concede the close relationship between this concept and Spengler's culture-civilization dichotomy. But we should hold that every individual man, at any period in history, must develop his own mature "civilization" out of his own childhood "culture." Again, Spengler's use of the formula vows him to an overly mystical notion of historic change. Also, it asks us to think of culture and civilization as historic absolutes, with one reigning at one time and the other reigning at another, a schematization that makes for a false philosophy of purpose. Yet it is undeniable that the accumulated by-products leading to "alienation" are greater in some periods than others. And our concept might offer a method of conversion whereby Spengler's formula could be sufficiently "discounted" to make it useful for a Marxist critique of social relationships.

"In the modern laboratory, the procedure of *invention* itself (the very essence of the imaginative) has been bureaucratized. Since the time of the Renaissance, the West has been accumulating and perfecting a *methodology* of invention, so that improvements can now be coached by routine. Science, knowledge, is the bureaucratization of wisdom."

The citation is long. But I assure you that, after many tentatives, it is the quickest way I know of correcting the falsities of emphasis in Hook's simplified report of the tenor and contents of my book. Hook makes my whole book appear like a mere off-shoot of the Stalin-Trotsky controversy, an issue to which he devotes more space in his 5 pages than I do in my 480 pages. I freely state, in this sentence, my sympathy with the momentous tasks confronting the U. S. S. R., and my admiration for the magnitude of its attainments. But by far my major interest is with the analysis of cultural processes as revealed by any and all kinds of historical and personal situations. And I believe that this quotation, despite the fact that it contains many terms requiring development elsewhere in my book, is sufficiently clear in itself to make my perspective apparent. In passing quickly by the core of my book, its concern with the psychology of art, Hook says that it deals with "attitudes toward life—anytime, anywhere." But when discussing, by garbled and misleading quotation, a single projection I make from this material, he seeks to give the impression that it is *the most restricted*

kind of party politics. So you have your choice between these two mutually exclusive pictures which Hook offers in the same review (a club offer if there ever was one). I heard him the first time.

Hook does bring up one technical point, however, that I consider reputable. So far I can see, it is mainly directed against another book of mine, *Permanence and Change*, a general study of perspective, interpretation, communication. In the course of this study, I illustrate my notion of perspective by giving many examples of different and conflicting perspectives that overlap one another on the bias. And while showing a representative lot, and explaining how they operate, I also select the one I consider best for the charting of social relationships. It is a perspective stressing communication, coöperation, participation—a pro-communist, anti-capitalist perspective. I seek to motivate the choice by showing the relevancy of this perspective to our current experience and the scope of its inclusiveness. Hook would interpret the display of the general list to be “subjective”; and my selection from the list, with the displaying of its relevance as a justification for the choice, he would call a shift to “absolutism.” After reading Hook’s review, I can see why he should consider it a tremendous give-away on my part to put my cards face-up on the table by revealing that a perspective is a *choice*. But I take such presentation of the whole story to be a normal practice of discourse (normal, that is, once we get outside Hook’s orbit of reporting). But if, after revealing representative items from which a choice may be made, we then make our choice, and proceed to show the evidence of its scope and relevancy, if that is a shift from “subjectivism” to “absolutism,” will Hook please tell me what more reasonable mode of discourse is possible? I grant that many of our present concerns (due to the “revolutionary psychosis” of a highly transitional era) will probably seem irrelevant to some subsequent era of history characterized by great stability. But is it “absolutist” for one to show their relevance *for us and our necessities* (which are as real as anything can be)—and is it “subjectivist” to admit that the “us” and the “necessities” of some other era may require a different perspective?

In closing: is it not noteworthy that never once, not even to answer in the negative, does Hook ask whether there is one single ingredient in my book that might be used (either as it is, or after such-and-such improvement) for anti-capitalist diagnosis and exhortation? He never even thinks of approaching the book from that angle. He might have damned it just as heartily as he does; that’s not the point. The point is that he spontaneously ignores such concerns. If a writer, supposedly of the Left, writing in an American magazine that would consider itself of the Left, does not review books from the standpoint of their function as adjuncts in the changing of capitalist values (their function in promoting shifts in allegiance to the current symbols of authority, and in showing the qualities of experience revealed by such a perspective) it is a misnomer for him to designate himself a partisan of the Left at all. Let him condemn as much work as he cares to; no writer can call for quarter on the

grounds that his heart is in the right place (on the Left side of his body) ; but if the attack itself is not Leftist in perspective, if it loses all interest in the analysis of capitalist dilemmas and the ways of surmounting them, the attacker thereby incidentally adopts a position that "places" him decidedly elsewhere.

KENNETH BURKE

IS MR. BURKE SERIOUS?

IN MY review of his book, I paid Burke the respect of taking his work seriously. His rejoinder makes me wonder whether he desires me to do so. I cannot understand him except on the assumption that—despite his statement to the contrary—he *does* believe allowance should be made for the fact that his heart is politically in the right place. Now were I evaluating Burke's intentions, as distinct from the validity of his assertions, I certainly would have given him credit for them. Provided, of course, I believed his heart was politically in the right place. In my review, at any rate, I did indicate its location accurately enough. But it so happens that I do not believe it is in the right place. Therefore in a serious attempt to do him justice, I addressed myself to what might more legitimately be regarded as the off-spring of his *mind*, i.e., his ideas.

Burke's protest includes other things besides the demand that his intentions and allegiance be evaluated. He also claims (1) that I have completely misrepresented the nature of his book (2) that my criticism of his relativism is without merit, and (3) that my own position is suspect because I do not approach *his* position from the proper angle. I wish to consider these claims before returning to his intentions and allegiance.

(1) Primarily the function of a critic is to consider, not whether the author says what he means, but the meaning of what has been said. Burke may be the best judge of what he *wanted* to say. But on the meaning of what he *has* said—he is not necessarily more competent than other intelligent readers. Every reader can test the accuracy of my description of Burke's position by reading the book and my review of it. I invite the comparison.

Burke's own evidence that I have misread his book does not establish his claim. I did not "pass over" the material concerned with the psychology of art because I "have never paid attention to such matters." Does Burke really believe that my published work is "ample evidence" of my inattention to such matters? What a wordy world this would be if the only way we could show we were interested in anything was to rush into print about it! Indeed, I wish to assure him that I pay a great deal of attention to such matters. And precisely because I do, I found his psychology of art not worth more than the casual reference I made

to it. Were I reviewing Burke's *Counter-Statement* I should have had a great deal to say about his psychology of art, some of it quite appreciative. But in his present book, the detailed discussion of the poetic metaphors, in which the individual frames of reference are expressed, runs out into the thinnest vagaries. More important, these aesthetic discussions are matters of detail. They do not concern, as Burke implies they do, the central theme of his work.

Nor is it apparent what the citation of his prize passage about the "bureaucratization of the imaginative" proves. In my review I gave a brief analysis designed to show that his position here reduces either to a truism or an absurdity.* Then I applied to Burke his *own* principle that a key metaphor is a better clue to understanding an author than his arguments, and explored the consequences. Although I do not share Burke's principle, the absence of developed argument in his work, justified this approach. I gave some indication of how it was used on several concrete occasions, and then proceeded, on Burke's own recommendation, "to discount" the face value of the phrase, and to note the "interests" it protected. The few *concrete* situations in which practical social conclusions are implied by this metaphor involve Russia. They are directed, not only in the cited passage but in others, against socialist critics. If every venture of the human spirit can be regarded as a bureaucratized compromise—even science and the imagination!—any specific bureaucratic outrage is part of the natural order of things. Criticism can be dismissed as Utopianism. This is a cunning but none the less fallacious linguistic device to attach the emotional associations of authoritative symbols—science, art, invention—to a specific form of political despotism. Employed by commercial advertisers, it is a technique which Burke has castigated elsewhere. Instead of using the hedonic overtones of a sensuous female in a bathtub to sell a bar of soap, Burke uses the poetical overtones of recondite metaphors, whenever his discussion touches concrete issues, to sell the ideas and practices of totalitarian communism under Stalin.

(2) Burke has so completely missed the point of my criticism of his shifts from subjectivism to absolutism that I must repeat it briefly here. An element of arbitrary choice inheres in any perspective or point of view. I can look here or there; accept this set of social ideals or that. But *what can be seen* after I decide to look here or there, *what follows* as a result of actions for or against certain ideals, does not depend upon my choice. I can change my point of view but not the consequences of a point of view. The gravamen of my criticism of Burke is that he gets his relativism and absolutism in the wrong place. When his particular

* In passing I wish to point out that to speak of science as the bureaucratization of wisdom is not only a misleading but a dangerous metaphor. The methods of science are the only reliable methods by which *new* knowledge (and the wisdom relevant to knowledge) are won. Because it never considers any question as closed, bases its conclusions on verifiable evidence, recognizes no authority except that of experiment and logic, it represents, where it is free, the end of all bureaucratic creedal dogmatism.

social perspective is confronted by others, he forgets his own theory and tends to regard it as "true," as something assimilable to fact. He absolutizes what cannot be absolutized. But just as soon as anyone holds him to the consequences of his point of view and uses them as evidence of what he is committed to, Burke either denies their relevance or what is still worse, as his airy references to the Moscow trials show, interprets facts and evidence as he pleases. Here he relativizes what cannot be relativized.

Burke asserts that I seek to give the impression that his point of view is that "*of the most restricted kind of party politics.*" He must have read my review very hastily. I quoted him as accepting, with direct reference to Russia, a communist frame "of ideological homogeneity, to be corrected by a *methodology* of latitudinarianism." Latitudinarianism, he says, "is another word for casuistic stretching." This works out in practice as follows. Any major policy or action sanctioned by the official interpreters of communist ideological homogeneity must be accepted. But it need not be defended or justified in the official way. Usually the official defense repels intelligent and sensitive people. Burke's "latitudinarianism" in practice amounts to thinking up persuasive rhetorical apologies for conclusions for which there is no *objective evidence*. Burke does not follow a party line to a party conclusion. He follows his own line to a party conclusion. Few know how he will get there, still fewer can understand the amazing ways by which he gets there, but all know he *will* get there—and that's the main thing.

(3) Burke's private bull of excommunication against me because I did not give three socialist cheers in my review of his book, to show where I stood, is amusing. (It's the party line on Hook all right but in Burke's own way.) It is also a little saddening because it verifies in part the prediction I made about the consequences of his political perspective upon his critical powers. His argument is not only *ad hominem* but disingenuous. First, the truth or falsity of my criticisms does not depend upon my socialist opinions. Second, my socialist opinions—good, bad or indifferent—have been expressed in numerous other writings. Third, Burke is acquainted with these writings as his references to them in his own books show. Fourth, for a socialist audience, such as the PARTISAN REVIEW attempts to reach, I regard the exposure of Burke's technique of mystification as necessary in the interests of clarity, truth, and *socialism*.

I now return to Burke's intentions and allegiance which, he insists, must be considered. Very well, I shall oblige him. Nowhere, complains Burke, have I allowed for the fact that his general perspective is pro-socialist. A strange complaint! When Burke attacks socialist critics of Stalinism, does *he* call attention to *their* anti-capitalism? He does not! Or when he criticizes Trotsky, or Dewey, or Farrell? He does not! But just as soon as his own position is probed, he makes loud outcry that he is not being given sufficient credit for his socialist intentions. Is Burke really serious?

I cannot give Burke credit for his socialist intentions—not yet. I am prepared to give him credit, if he asks for it, for not taking pennies from a blind man's cup or not scalping his grandmother. But I refuse to give him credit for his "socialism"—*until I know what kind of socialism he believes in!*

Does he believe in a socialism in which judicial and extra-judicial frame-ups are the order of the day? If not, why does he accept and defend the most monstrous frame-ups in all history—the Moscow trials?

Does he believe in a socialism in which the dictatorship of a minority party, subject to the dictatorship of a bureaucracy, subject in turn to the dictatorship of its secretariat, enjoys a monopoly of *all* political power? If not, why his impatience and scorn for those whom he calls Utopians—who affirm that socialism without democracy is not socialism?

Does he believe in a socialism in which all art, science and philosophy are regimented by party-dogmas, imposed by authority and implemented by the threat of force? If not, why has he failed to protest the literary pogroms of the Communist Party, of which he is a leading fellow-traveller, against socialist intellectuals who hold that critical integrity is part of the socialist way of life?

Does he believe in the apotheosis of Stalin to a point which makes every political cult of adoration in the past, including that of Czarism, pale in comparison? If not, why does he write of him as he does? Why does he add his stammering note of spite to the Communist Party abuse of socialists who hold that Stalin's actions must be evaluated by socialist ideals? Why, when I charge him with accepting the political perspective of Stalinism, does he retort that he loves the U.S.S.R.? Are Stalin and the U.S.S.R. one and the same to him? What would he think of an American patriot who would meet a political criticism of Roosevelt with the retort that he loved America?

There are many other questions I would like to have answered before I can give Burke credit for his socialism.

In closing I wish to repeat the conclusion of my review. There are some social and political perspectives to-day which a critic cannot take without doing great harm to his craftsmanship. We have a right to expect more from Burke than from people like Granville Hicks whose intellectual reach, by a divine charity, extends no further than their near-sighted piety. That is why I took Burke seriously.

SIDNEY HOOK

THEATER CHRONICLE

AS SHAKESPEARE has been said to have populated all corners of history and legend with "deathless Englishmen," so Clifford Odets seems to have resettled America and even China (*The General Died at Dawn*) with citizens of the Bronx. The salient feature of *Golden Boy* (Belasco Theater), which is supposed to be a play about an Italian boy named Bonaparte who wanted to be a violinist but became a prizefighter instead, is that it is not at all about an Italian boy but about that same talkative, histrionic Jewish family to which Mr. Odets has introduced us before. *Golden Boy* again demonstrates the lesson of *Paradise Lost*: that Mr. Odets appears to be psychically glued to the material of his first play. He cannot advance beyond *Awake and Sing*: he can only revive it with different costumes, scenery, and (sometimes) accents. That the refurbishing of the material implies its adulteration seems not to concern Mr. Odets, who perhaps imagines that he is exploring genuinely new horizons; but to those who have admired *Awake and Sing*, each new play seems a more shocking caricature of the first.

It is well known that actors who have been playing for a long time in the same play will, unless disciplined by a vigilant stage manager, "hoke" their performances more and more. A giggle becomes a laugh; a catch in the throat, a sob; a tremor, a spasm. This is a form of auto-intoxication which is psychologically necessary for the type of player who must "feel" his performance. He must behave more and more violently in order to sense that he is acting. This law of diminishing returns from a given stimulus is, of course, observable in every field of sensibility, and its workings are particularly striking in the case of Mr. Odets. The narrowness of his invention, the monotony of his subject-matter have anaestheticized him to the point where he must wade in blood and tears in order to feel that he is writing a play; he must turn the Belasco Theater into a Grand Guignol to believe it a play-house.

Thus the simple Bronx apartment-dwellers of *Awake and Sing* appear in *Golden Boy* dressed up as gangsters, prizefighters, and tarts. Mr. Odets has taken a collection of types out of any underworld film, and on them he has grafted the half-ludicrous, half-touching cultural aspirations, the malapropisms, the pride in material possessions, the inarticulate longing for sunny life, that make up the Odets formula of frustration. The Chekhovian baggage of middle-class futility with which Mr. Odets equips these low-life stereotypes is, of course, fearfully inappropriate to the milieu of lust, murder, crime, and perversion in which they must travel. The voices are the dreamy, ineffectual voices of the little people of the world; the deeds are the deeds of the headliners. This contradiction between form and substance gives the play the aspect of a fancy-dress ball; there is the same grotesquerie, the same stridency, the same laughable yet indecent incongruity.

Golden Boy is a much more popular play than *Awake and Sing*. The melodramatic nature of the characters and events would alone guarantee its success at the box-office. But Mr. Odets has taken out double insurance against the failure of his work by stuffing it with familiar Jewish low-comedy jokes and ancient wheezes out of vaudeville. Yet, though the stale luridity of characters and plot and the stale gag-comedy of the lines have been sufficient to keep audiences in the alternate shivers and stitches to which the underworld films have habituated them, it is not these qualities which have commanded the deferential attention of both critics and playgoers. Serious people have sat unflinchingly through this play, because they knew or thought they knew that Mr. Odets had Something To Say, that somewhere in this theatrical grab-bag there lay a treasure.

Mr. Odets has a theme which in the last century would have been stated as Money Does Not Bring Happiness. But Mr. Odets conceives of it in more modern terms. He would summarize it, I suppose, by saying that the struggle for financial success which the capitalist system tends to impose on the individual is detrimental to personal happiness and to culture. Stated thus abstractly, the theme does Mr. Odets credit. Concretely visualized as a choice between playing the violin and fighting in the prize ring, it already becomes a little obvious, a little tawdry. But, granting Mr. Odets the virtue of this rather simple-minded antithesis, one finds that here it has been distorted out of all truth and vulgarized out of all nobility. In the selection of a superman for a hero lies the essential hollowness of the play, for the choice between culture and money cannot be valid for a character who possesses two such remarkable gifts. If Mr. Odets' hero were a potentially great violinist, he could have become rich or at least prosperous via the concert stage, and he need never have considered prizefighting as an alternative career. If he were not, then his abandonment of the violin was surely no tragedy. But Mr. Odets' juggling of his theme does not stop with this original false alternative; it eats deeper into the plot. What is the cause of Bonaparte's downfall and death? His greed for money, his selection of prizefighting as a life work? Not at all. A purely *accidental*, non-social circumstance: the fact that the girl he loved felt pity, loyalty, and tenderness for another man. One assumes that, were it not for the girl, Mr. Odets' hero would have been as successful and as long-lived as Jack Dempsey, Mickey Walker, Gene Tunney, or any other well-known fighter. He might have even become a *restaurateur*, or perhaps had some very satisfying musical conversations with Yehudi Menuhin. Mr. Odets' social theme, like his formula for the manufacture of characters, is a carry-over from his first and most sincere play. It is clearly inoperative in the world of macabre melodrama into which he has imported it. That he was forced to use a fortuitous, melodramatic device to dissolve the elements of his play and bring it to its falsely tragic curtain is itself an exposé of the play's "serious" pretensions.

MARY MCCARTHY

BOOKS

THE BROWN BOOK OF HEINRICH HEINE

HEINRICH HEINE: PARADOX AND POET. By Louis Untermeyer.
Two volumes. Harcourt, Brace. \$6.00.

Strictly speaking, there are two books and they are blue. Neatly packaged, gaudily displayed, highly seasoned, expensively put up, ready to be hastily purchased and casually consumed, they constitute a choice item for the delicatessen trade. One volume, a revision and enlargement of the translation published twenty years ago, contains almost half of Heine's verse. The other is a life, the product—according to the jacket—of a lifetime of study. The biographer and translator is described as “the American Heine.” In a preface Louis Untermeyer demurely meets this description half-way. In an appendix he intrepidly includes an original poem, an imitation of Browning which presents the prostrate Untermeyer-Heine dying in the bosom of the synagogue.

Pareto called Reinach's *Orpheus* a history of religions in the light of the Dreyfus case. Here, then, is a biography of Heine in the light of the Hitler terror. The timeliness of this theme, the motives of the author, the implications of his Pan-Hebraism—these red herrings are easily resisted. But since Untermeyer is inclined to make Heine the vehicle for his own particular *Judenschmerz*, and since his interpretation is likely to be much publicized, there is some excuse for calling attention to the limitations of his equipment and the distortions of his point of view. A critic who can detect “spiritual nostalgia” in Heine's picture of Moses Lump eating *gefüllte* fish (page 177) is bound to be led astray by so elusive and embattled a writer. And it is characteristic of Untermeyer, even in this instance, that he should tamper with the bill of fare.

A further glance at his documentation will not inspire confidence. He cites, on page 157, Heine's celebrated remarks about Liberty: the Englishman loves her as his lawful wife, the Frenchman as his chosen bride (Untermeyer has “mistress”), and the German as his old grandmother. Yet the irritable Englishman, translates Untermeyer, “in a fit of temper (*seines Weibes überdrüssig?*)”, may put a rope around his wife's neck.”—*Und bringt sie zum Verhauf nach Smithfield*, adds Heine. She is not to be hanged, she is only to be auctioned off. In the course of a lifetime of study one may forget that Smithfield is a cattle market, but one ought to pick up a reading knowledge of German. One ought to pick up, indeed, a certain familiarity with Heine's writings. It would be impossible to assert that Heine never set down his impressions of Paganini (192) if one were familiar with the *Florentinische Nächte*.

The works are often consulted, but only to squeeze out the last drop of personal revelation. Thus Untermeyer finds Heine's mistress in his Shakespearean criticism (263) and his first love in *Die Lorelei* (117)—even though this ballad is scarcely more than a paraphrase of a poem by Graf Loeben. Attempts to reach a wider orientation prove embarrassing. It is a nice question whether the statement that Wordsworth and Coleridge were at their height in 1827 (156) proceeds from a lack of historical background or of critical insight. The very names of Shakespeare's plays, and of the kings of England as well, suffer a sea-change (264). There are footnotes on Jewish cooking (135f.), but no explanation of Saint-Simonism. There are pages on venereal disease, and a single paragraph on those brilliant polemical achievements, the *Romantische Schule* and *Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* (225). There are lavish introductions to Jewish student friends, but great teachers like Wolf and Bopp, who helped to shape the modern mind, are dismissed with wisecracks (70). Heine—to labor the point no longer — has fallen into the hands of a philistine.

And he is shorn of his distinction. The shabby story is there—the debts and diseases, the malice and vanity, the shrill audacity and nervous compliance. Virtually a blackmailer, conceivably an *agent provocateur*, a *verruchter Abenteurer* Gentz called him, and he was a connoisseur of such matters. Yet Heine remains an exciting figure because his adventures took place in the realm of ideas, a realm which Untermeyer's ignorance of the landmarks prevents him from entering. Hence he exhibits Heine's wounds, without giving us any notion of the battles in which they were gained. He is at home with Heine's weaknesses. In terms of *kosher* domesticity and *boulevard* lubricity he can explain everything except what is important, what differentiates Heine from any cloak-and-suit dealer. The paradox is that Heine, as an intellectual adventurer and literary technician, is constantly contradicting these initial factors of environment and temperament. This volume can account for the sordid compromises of his life, but not for the flashing contradictions of his art.

Nor can the other volume, since Untermeyer's versions of Heine's poems betray the same trivializing *Tendenz*. Take, for example, the lines on Germany, *Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland*. By the expedient of twisting a neuter subject to the second person, Untermeyer insinuates a *femme fatale* into the second stanza, and touching reminiscence becomes erotic fantasy. Uniformly the fatherland is soft-pedalled and the flesh-pots are played up. Hyperion's sensuality becomes a satyr's leer. One celebration of feminine charms, beginning *Welch ein zierlich Ebenmass*, terminates with Aphrodite rising from the sea,

*Anmutblühend, schönheitstrahlend,
Und, versteht sich, wohlgewaschen.*

The last word is translated "well-developed," having evidently been confused with *wohlgewachsen*. Untermeyer can be forgiven for his Freudian lapse, but not for missing the point. For sheer palpable grossness, how-

ever, the first stanza of the *Schöpfungslieder* is to be recommended:

*Hierauf schuf er auch die Ochsen,
Aus dem Schweisse seiner Stirne.*

Here, where the Old Testament would be really relevant, Untermeyer has a surprise for us:

Thereupon he fashioned cattle
From his excess perspiration.

As a suggested exercise, compare the translation of *Geh nicht durch die böse Strasse* with the original; see how Untermeyer—unaware that Heine is addressing himself—starts off on the wrong tack, is forced to transpose sexes throughout, and achieves nonsense.

It is hardest to translate the poet who, like Heine, uses the simplest language. To satisfy the exigencies of rhyme and meter, and of meaning wherever possible, sooner or later requires recourse to the far-fetched and the artificial. Translation has no power over Heine's crucial quality, his natural diction, which is notably more idiomatic within the attenuated compass of the songs than in the free verse of *Die Nordsee*. Untermeyer's English versions have one of the virtues of *Lieder*: they can be sung. Somehow or other he has coaxed, cajoled, cabined, cribbed, confined, and crammed them into the original measures. Often he has thrown everything else overboard, in the attempt to capture some slight nuance. It is a Pyrrhic victory to have retained the rhymes of *Die Erde war so lange geizig*, when it has cost him the whole effect of the poem, the contrast between *Madame* and *Leibchen*, gallicized, gentility of style and downright emotion of content.

It would have been fairer to Heine and himself if, instead of concentrating on youthfully romantic lyrics, he had rendered some of the more loosely-knit topical pieces—*Deutschland*, *Atta Troll*, or more of the mock heroics and grim realities of *Romanzero*. The encyclopaedic doggerel of *Jehuda ben Halevy* is all there, except for a final fragment that bore traces of Heine's antisemitism. But, since Heine the critic and satirist is neglected by Untermeyer's canon, we have no grounds for considering his development and maturity, or for reconsidering his place in literature. So we are left with the Jewish Nightingale of Düsseldorf, that agonizing, attitudinizing, impossible young man who had such sleight-of-hand facility in appropriating a vocabulary of symbols and a repertory of gestures for his own selfish purposes. Easy and melodious we find him, but full of conceits and echoes. For freshness and intensity he cannot stand up beside Goethe at his straightforward best—*Freudvoll und leidvoll* or *Wer nie sein Brot mit Tränen ass*. It is significant that Heine's greatest popularity has been outside Germany, just as his disciple, A. E. Housman, appeals chiefly to those who have no particular interest in poetry.

Seeking comparisons, we get a sharper impression by looking ahead to Baudelaire than by harking back to the inevitable Burns. In both Heine and Baudelaire we encounter a poetry of streets and attics, an

essential modernity, a sophisticated technique of cutting through conventions. The past is always with them, but only to throw into relief their sense of the present; coal barges now ply the Thames where once Elizabeth and Leicester rode in state. Heine is fond of graves and visions, of spooks and poltergeists, but in no Keats-like dedication to the spirit of romance. He is always spoiling the Grimm fairy-tale and showing up the Wagnerian stage-machinery. Consider his most obvious success, *Die Grenadiere*, where he creates a legend out of the stuff of contemporary politics by the striking adaptation of folklore *motifs* and tricks of bal-ladry. Remember the portentous rhythms that make his song of the Silesian weavers a kind of witches' incantation for textile-workers. By Heine the doubts and decisions of the nineteenth century are orchestrated to the horns of Elfland.

Heine, in other words, is a counter-romanticist. His relation to the romantic school is like that of Feuerbach to the Hegelian philosophy. The continuity is complete, but the direction has been reversed. Marx and Engels saw this, and for Heine's wayward career as a soldier in the *Befreiungskrieg* they had little but indulgence and admiration. Byron, Pushkin, and Stendhal are also paradoxes, men who were so psychologically enfranchised that their work is a contradiction of their time. Like Heine, they professed the culture of the enlightenment, the cult of Napoleon, and the pretensions of a dandy. In contradistinction to the romanticists, they preferred cosmopolite liberalism to nationalistic reaction, rationalistic irony to mystical sentiment. Byron was a club-footed peer as Heine was a paralyzed Jew, and what is extraordinary is what they shared. Wit and radicalism are complexities that cannot be exorcized by the application of a Jewish label, any more than literary achievement can be set forth in other terms than its own. *Heinrich Heine: Paradox and Poet* is the cruellest of Louis Untermeyer's well-known parodies. It is a Heinesque irony that, for all his good intentions, he should give us a caricature which Julius Streicher could hardly fail to approve—the grotesquely crooked nose, the bestially slobbering lips, and an unmistakable suggestion of garlic.

HARRY LEVIN

POPULIST REALISM

AN ARTIST IN AMERICA. By Thomas Benton. McBride. \$3.75.

Benton's autobiography is a manifesto addressed to abstractionists, radicals and true Americans. He tells how he grew up in a philistine Missouri community at the end of the last century, became an artist from sheer bravado, fled to Chicago and then to Paris and New York, and painted abstractions until the war when he turned to objects and

conceived the historical murals for which he is famous. Through this conversion he regained a sense of solidarity with the world about him which he painfully lacked when he was struggling as an abstract artist. But New York in the '30s, with its radical intellectuals and sectarian criticism was too much for him; he felt isolated in the big un-American city. Knowing America as he did, the communist theories seemed ineffectual and foreign and threatened his liberty as an artist. In the last chapter he packs up and returns to the Middle West where he hopes to be free of such pressure. He had travelled in the South during the years after the War and come to like the plain people, the farmers, boatmen, Negroes and cowboys; he found in them the subjects for his new realistic art. The greater part of the book consists of anecdotes of these travels, stories of odd encounters and conversations, and some general reflections on the people and the country.

Others have written of the South with more pungency and insight and with less self-consciousness. But the book has a special interest as the experience of a painter converted from a formalizing to a realistic art and as an account of the impact of the economic crisis on an artist with a stabilized manner. But of his own experience as a painter, Benton says very little; and despite his frankness and his admission of doubts, the story of his pivotal decisions and their effects is too much on the surface, too rationalized, to be altogether convincing. The reader is disposed to penetrate it with his own suspicions. Benton brusquely disavows his abstractionist past and presents his later experience in facile antitheses to illustrate his theoretical oppositions of the country to the city, the native to the foreign and realism to abstraction. Towards the large movement of modern art he adopts a purely philistine attitude, judging it not by its best works or in the light of problems posed by the time, but by his own uneasiness with it and by the personalities of secondary rival painters. He ignores its distinctive character as an art and describes it as a product of neurotic minds or simply as a theory, an exhibition of principles formulated in talk. His own obvious indebtedness to it he veils by referring naïvely to the time when he finally rid himself of all its traces. "We were essentially Bohemians adrift from the currents of our land."

In turning from geometrical forms to objects, Benton imagines that he has entered fully into the life of his time. The mere representation of railroad trains and farmers gives him the illusion of a mystical rapport with a superior American reality. Just as he once assumed that geometrical forms brought the artist in touch with the inner structure of the world or the essence of art, so he now seems to believe that by depicting native objects he is grasping the essence of American life. But this essence is only an aspect or a segment, and its claim to permanence or inheritance is refuted by its own history. We have only to read Benton's story of his conversion, short as it is, to see the limitations of his view.

When America entered the War, he and Craven "were well aware of the fact that the country was out to defend the affairs of citizens with

whom we had little or nothing in common. We could see no point in taking risks for dollars which we could never share." Through a friend of the family—the Bentons had been politically important in Missouri—he managed to be placed as a draftsman in the Norfolk naval base, making pictures for the architects. "My interests became, in a flash, of an objective nature. The mechanical contrivances of building, the new airplanes, the blimps, the dredges, the ships of the base, because they were so interesting in themselves, tore me away from all my grooved habits, from my play with colored cubes and classic attenuations, from aesthetic drivelings and morbid self-concerns. I left for good the art-for-art's sake world in which I had hitherto lived." He got along well with the southern boys at the naval base, feeling more secure with them than with "the cultivated people of the art worlds"; they were like his childhood friends in Missouri. "They were objective. They were interested in things, rather than in selves." After the War, returning to the city, he "proclaimed heresies around New York. I set out painting American histories in defiance of all the conventions of our art world. I talked too much, and trod on all sorts of sensibilities and made enemies. But I didn't care." Apparently, in substituting blimps for cubes he was still an abstracting eye, remote from the "main currents of our land." He still belongs to this art world that he affects to despise; and his work remains infected with a clumsy, stiff formalism inherited from his abstractionist days. His objectivity as a painter, limited to buildings and machines and the picturesqueness of native "types," exacted no deeper insight into American life. And although his conversion was a result of the war on which he held such decided and penetrating views, he disavows any "social ideas" and feels no need to reconcile his new sympathy for the people with his indifference to their betrayal in the War.

His idea of a realistic art is expressed as an opposition to two extremes. In criticizing abstract art, he isolates objects as the true field of painting; in criticizing a realism guided by radical values and a desire for change, he poses the stable, unpolitical everyday world and the corresponding historical past as the proper subjects for art. If we must not escape from this world, neither should we try to change it. He thus implies a "just middle," like the academic compromise in the last century. Benton's vehemence against both sides, his constant assertion of individual freedom and his petty unconventionalism conceal his essential conformity. The common energy of his figures, each moving in its own way, a vast perspective field, resembles the optimistic idea of an expanding American world in which everyone is active and free to follow his own ends in a limitless space. His reduction of the tense historical reality of our time to fragmentary candid shots, interchangeable incidents, figures and machines in a formally supervised panorama of unfocused activity has also its political parallel. It corresponds to the liberal conservatism (resting especially on the support of the lower middle class) which addresses the people as a unity without classes, which admits only an *accidentally* privileged, immoral minority of

wealth and idealizes an earlier stage of popular rule as a norm of democracy constantly threatened and regained.

Although Benton talks as if he represents the people as a whole, this fiction disappears when we regard his comments on oppressed groups or his particular choice of material and even his style of painting. In describing the South he is forced in 1937 to observe the oppression of the Negroes and the poor white farmers; in his earlier realistic painting their misery is for him a local and picturesque affair. If it is now a condition to be improved through good will, the chief obstacle is the peculiar psychology of the *southern* masters. He may at one point praise the liberals who try to improve these conditions; but against those who wish to organize the Negroes politically, he argues that the Negroes are too uneducated and that this will only antagonize the whites and bring on fascism. The conciliation which underlies this view appears in other details. In the face of insecurity and discontent he hopes to recreate a respect for old ways, for local history and peculiarities, to win people back to native traditions. The division into regions becomes more important than the division into classes. The more crucial history, including our own time, is obscured or fractioned into bits of local genre. If he represents a political meeting in dramatic linear contrasts, it is without reference to the clash of interests, but has the sense of a local domestic custom; the kids squabble and a mother changes the baby's diaper. His theory of art, like the liberal aesthetics of the colleges, supports the same attitude, though it hardly does justice to the complexity of his own art. The real purpose of painting is to get people to see the qualities of things, apart from their use. This is a domestic impressionist view which, in opening our eyes to our surroundings (a value we must not underestimate), detaches art from fantasy and drama and from the more massive and disturbing reality of passions and conflicts. It admits change only at the expense of history, by infusing all things equally with the same phenomenal motion.

If Benton's Middle West was once intolerable to him as an artist because its hard practicality made a disinterested love of nature and art impossible, he now regards it as the region most favorable to art because it seems to offer him an escape from the demands of the crisis. However much he may attribute radicalism in art to the influence of un-American intellectuals, he himself cannot evade the conditions which have given a new value to these foreign ideas. But how pitiful and inept are his alternative conclusions! and how they illuminate the character of his art! This man who speaks of having read Marx and Dewey builds a new American culture on the "failure of capitalism" and on the "great change which is already taking place. "The age of raging greed is past. . . . Approaching death leads to reflection and reflection leads to appreciation of the drama of life, of the values of simple existence which stand apart from ends and purposes." And this in turn promotes a new interest in art in the Middle West, which bears the promise of a great American art, "for it is in the drama of things that are that art must

take its first original steps." The future lies in the small towns and the country. "The great cities are dead. They offer nothing but coffins for living and thinking."

The first steps are the murals of Benton of which the originality lies, I think, in the coincidence of homely popular genre and artificial, energetic, monumental effects. He aspires to create an official art, local in content, national in scale. It is monumental about small things, small about crucial momentous changes, full of activity, but with little movement of ideas and sentiments. His murals are enlargements of intimate, trivial and amusing scenes, well adapted to the casual eye of the tourist or hearty philistine spectator. The small occasions of life are not deepened as in older genre painting, but simply magnified. In his most recent murals, reproduced in part on the jacket of the book, the foreground is filled with ingratiating domestic details—the dogs, the mother wiping her baby's bottom, the munching, overalled boy beside the mother rolling the dough, and the naked muscle-bound backs of the men, one sawing wood away from the spectator, the other washing his neck toward the spectator. These are arranged in a banal symmetrical scheme, unrelated to any larger meaning of the figures, and are cast in a visual melodrama of diagonal perspectives, strained, insistent, metropolitan, with the formal strategy of a piece of advertising. The visceral involvement of groups is a formalized linking of essentially disconnected objects. Since the composition of Benton has been compared with Rubens', it must be observed that in Benton the analogy and contrast of adjacent lines is relatively inexpressive, at any rate has little to do with the human connections of the represented figures. It relates to Rubens' as modern blank verse to Shakespeare's. The exaggerated awkward energy is the male counterpart of the effeminacy that he cannot tolerate in homosexuals and that he cheaply denounces in this book as a menace to the coming American culture. It is a mannered art, for Benton imposes his tics and ambitions on everything. His lack of delicacy, of refinement and of pathos make us regret that he is not more feminine. The coarse, sweetish coloring reminds one of commercial painting; its absence from his black-and-whites make these at once more agreeable and releases their touch of honest poetry.

Benton has been criticized as fascist, but such a judgment is premature. To accept his ideas and art on their face value, to welcome them as an expression of "democratic individualism," would be no less absurd. Benton repudiates European fascism, but fascism draws on many streams including the traditional democratic. The appeal to the national sentiment should set us on guard, whatever its source. And when it comes as does Benton's with his conceited anti-intellectualism (he has also his own pretentious intellectuality), his hatred of the foreign, his emphasis on the strong and the masculine, his uncritical and unhistorical elevation of the folk, his antagonism to the cities, his ignorant and violent remarks on radicalism, we have good reason to doubt his professed liberalism and to expose its inconsistencies.

MEYER SCHAPIRO

ART IN THE SECOND EMPIRE

THE JOURNAL OF EUGENE DELACROIX. *Translated from the French by Walter Pach. Covici-Friede. \$7.50.*

The Journal of Delacroix offers perhaps the most complete glimpse into the 19th century's aesthetic workings that has come down to us. For this reason it may suggest a certain tedium and banality, particularly to those attuned to the contemporary outlook. On nearly every page will appear one of those incredible aesthetic judgments and attitudes toward society that we are still trying to forget. Page 215 offers an example: "In the evening went to see Mme. Jaubert. Saw portraits and Persian drawings which caused me to repeat what Voltaire says somewhere, more or less like this: there are vast countries where taste has never penetrated; they are those countries of the Orient in which there is no society, where women are degraded, etc. All the arts are stationary there. In these drawings there is neither perspective nor any feeling for what is really painting, that is, a certain illusion of projection. The figures are motionless, the poses awkward, etc."

Yet the picture is so complete that the various sections of the book, which often seem as irrelevant as a piece isolated from a puzzle, become full of meaning in their context. For Delacroix was a man of the world to an extent that makes our artists seem provincial. He mingled freely with the bourgeois society of the Second Empire. Many of the important figures were his intimate friends. He attended the opera and the concerts, he read the books of the period, and he commented on everything he saw and heard. Above all, despite fame and flattery, he retained an astonishing humility. He devoted pages to the exaltation of Raphael, Rubens, Correggio, as magicians he never could hope to approach. With his own work he is sometimes "pleased," at other times his opinion is very modest. "Tuesday, Dec. 30, 1823. . . . Meanwhile I have sold my wretched *Ivanhoe* to M. Coutan, the collector of Scheffer's work. Poor man! and he says he will buy others from me." And in criticism he takes infinite pains to record the dicta of his friends, usually putting them forward as the final comment.

Typical of the Romantic era is Delacroix's slowness to mature. The Journal falls roughly into two halves; the first section includes the years 1822-53, the second (longer and more complete) from 1853-63. The first comprises largely unfelt generalizations—tedious panegyrics on the greatness of Shakespeare, Beethoven, Rubens—alternating with attempts to pursue some pulchritudinous waitress who had served him at a friend's dinner. His celebrated trip to Morocco in 1832 makes one of the dullest portions of the book; most of it are jottings for future illustrations. It has long been the fashion for critics to look upon this excursion as a turning-point in Delacroix's career; but unhappily he

grasped only the picturesque aspects of the Moslems, with no trace of feeling for their character or the organic qualities of their art.

Then, about 1853, at the age of 55, the painter matures and becomes conscious. He outgrows his uncritical outbursts and starts to analyze the basis of aesthetics. From now on it is the limitations of the period of which we are conscious, and these he occasionally transcends. On music, for instance, his comments are pleasingly unexpected; with true Second Empire inconsistency he extolls Mozart and Cimarosa, and thunders against Berlioz, Meyerbeer, and Verdi, who are the true counterparts of his paintings. It is probably in music that our tastes today still have most in common with those of the 19th century. In painting, certainly, our horizon has broadened considerably. Delacroix's background was limited to the art of later Greece and the Renaissance; the vast stores of Egypt, the New World, and the Far East, lay as yet untouched. Equally unappreciated was the Marxian critique and the effects of the historical environment on the artist; Delacroix's single note for July 24, 1854, seems a trifle naïve today: "What Rembrandt and Michael Angelo would have been in our period!"

The remarks on the technique of oil-painting will be of inestimable value for an understanding of Renaissance art. One can learn from their beginnings the chiaroscuro principles of turning form through the broad high-light, the shadow, and the half-tone rub-in. Delacroix also analyzes figure-composition as far as it can be realized through the juxtaposition of light and shade. Such comments usually come to him in museums; he is a student until the end, and (like most painters) his own researches are irksome for him to write down. Occasionally, however, he emerges as the true precursor of Impressionism: "a scalawag had climbed up on the statues; I saw him in full sunlight: dull orange in the light, very lively violet tones for the passage from the shadow, and golden reflections in the shadows turned toward the ground. The orange and violet dominated alternately or mingled. The golden tone had a tendency toward green. Flesh gets its real color only in the open air, and especially in sunlight."

It was to the advantage of his journal that Delacroix immersed himself in Second Empire society. Yet it is apparent from the many illustrations which accompany the text, that the painter, except for an occasional fragmentary sketch or water-color, is handicapped by a curious lack of distinction. Such paintings as were at the time so stirring (in their subject-matter) seem displeasingly ordinary in their quality today. (Manet, the painter of the *grande bourgeoisie*, was to fall through the same deficiency.) A man who was so thoroughly an artist as this text reveals, should have achieved a more profound expression. It is perhaps significant that the 19th century painters who succeeded in achieving the full poise of the great masters (Cézanne, Seurat) were the isolationists.

GEORGE L. K. MORRIS

THE TOWER BEYOND POLITICS

SUCH COUNSELS YOU GAVE TO ME & OTHER POEMS. *By Robinson Jeffers. Random House. \$2.50.*

This latest volume of Jeffers can hardly be called "disappointing." For disappointment implies expectations, and these only the most inveterate Jeffers enthusiasts can still cherish. The decline which set in after *Cawdor* (1928) had already reached serious proportions with *Thurso's Landing* in 1932. But *Thurso* was really excellent compared to Jeffers' more recent work. There is something grotesque and pathetic in these recent volumes, like the return to the stage of some long-retired actress. The mannerisms, the gestures, the intonations of the cracked voice are just recognizable enough to be cruel caricature. Here in these poems are the same rolling, surflike lines, the same grandiose metaphors developed at Homeric length, the same stark, cruel, perverse human beings, the same noble landscape, which once were so enchanting. But each of these elements is a little out of focus. The verse still thunders, but confusedly and at times even prosily; the Homeric similes smell of the lamp; the people are perverse to the point of insanity; and the landscape, like many noble things, is a bit dull. It is not that Jeffers has changed, but rather precisely that he hasn't changed. His poetic values and his technical devices have persisted with remarkably little change (i.e., development) since he published *Roan Stallion* in 1925. But such things apparently don't keep well on ice. This poetry gives off an odor of decay, faint but unmistakable.

Jeffers' failure to develop poetically is parallel to his political development—or rather, lack of it. From the beginning of his career he has constantly expressed a high contempt for humanity, hence for society, hence for politics. As political issues have grown more crucial even in the lives of poets, Jeffers has protested ever more violently against this encroachment. In the shorter poems of this volume he seems to be obsessed with politics. His contempt for political prophets is expressed in the most prophetic language. The same rigidity and intellectual limitations which have prevented his poetical development have acted to make of him a self-appointed anti-political Messiah iterating his "message" the more insistently as its sterility becomes the more evident. It is a curious illustration of the impossibility of the modern writer's escaping his social responsibilities.

DWIGHT MACDONALD

RIPOSTES

The Temptation of Dr. Williams

As our readers know, the Communist Party seems to consider the destruction of *PARTISAN REVIEW* as important an effort as the destruction of Franco—perhaps a bit more important. The campaign seems to have two aspects: (1) open denunciations in the Party press; (2) a whispering campaign of slander supplemented by backstairs intrigue. Last month we gave some examples of the press attacks. And now we are able to present amateurs of literary politics with the interesting case of Dr. William Carlos Williams.

PARTISAN REVIEW regards Dr. Williams as an extremely accomplished poet. Consequently, when we set about reviving the magazine, we asked him to contribute. He replied:

Sept. 8.

Your note of Aug. 20 rec'd. I shall have a poem for the PARTISAN REVIEW in a week or ten days. Thank you for asking me to contribute. . . . Sincerely yours, W. C. Williams.

A few days later we received a poem from him. We kept it in our files, but wrote him again asking to see others. "O.K.," he wrote back, "Try this on your victrola!" and he enclosed a poem called "The Defective Record." On the strength of all this, we announced Dr. Williams as a future contributor. After consideration, we decided that neither of the poems in our possession represented his work at its best, and so we returned them, explaining our reasons and asking him to submit others. In reply he sent a postcard: "Your patience will make the flowers bloom." This was cryptic but seemed friendly enough.

We were, therefore, astonished to read in the *New Masses* of November 16 last:

Watch for these articles next week or later: . . . (2) a study of the writings of contributor H. H. Lewis, by

William Carlos Williams, author of In the American Grain and other works. Incidentally, some of our readers may have seen an advance notice of the Trotskyist PARTISAN REVIEW, announcing the anti-Soviet, anti-Communist contents of the first issue. William Carlos Williams is listed as a contributor, but he writes to the NEW MASSES that "the PARTISAN REVIEW has no contribution of mine nor will I send them any."

So it appeared that *PARTISAN REVIEW* was using Dr. Williams' name without any license! And the *New Masses* liked this idea so well that they repeated it in their next number. Now it happened that at this time *PARTISAN REVIEW* had not appeared; we knew of nothing that might have prompted Dr. Williams to make such a statement. So we wrote him asking for confirmation. He replied:

Your letter of yesterday calling attention to a quotation from a letter of mine which appeared in the current issue of New Masses reached me this morning. I hasten to reply—not that there is any need for haste but out of courtesy to all concerned.

You know, of course, that I have no reason for liking the PARTISAN REVIEW. I have, at the same time, no partisan interest in the New Masses. I had occasion to appear as a writer, for a special reason, in the New Masses and it looked as though I might appear also in the PARTISAN REVIEW. As my contribution to the New Masses was of longer standing and of more importance to me than the other and since I found the New Masses violently opposed to you on political grounds, so much so that they refused to print me if I remained a contributor to PARTISAN REVIEW, I made my choice in their favor.

Their quotation from my letter was correct.

If this letter is to be quoted will you please quote it entire.

This is plain enough. Seldom, in fact, has a transaction of this nature been avowed more frankly. The *New Masses* refused to print him unless he boycotted PARTISAN REVIEW—a condition in itself humiliating enough for a writer of Dr. Williams' standing. Apparently it was further stipulated—it is hard to believe that Dr. Williams volunteered for the job—that he also allow his relations with us to be publicly misrepresented. (It is, of course, literally true that we have no contribution of his—since we sent both poems back to him. But the implication is, to say the least, misleading.) We are distressed that Dr. Williams should lend himself to such shennanigans. And we are puzzled when he writes, "You know, of course, that I have no reason for liking the PARTISAN REVIEW." All we know is that he thought well enough of our venture to send us two poems and to promise others.

In its efforts to stifle independent left-wing expression, the *New Masses* has so far been signally unsuccessful. The Williams episode is its first triumph, so far as PARTISAN REVIEW is concerned. But what a victory! Conditions! Threats! Pressures! These are the tactics of the underworld. And it is now clear from which quarter factionalism in the left-wing literary movement issues. When Dr. Williams was invited to contribute to PARTISAN REVIEW he was not asked to boycott any other publication; nor would we for a moment presume to put any such conditions on our writers. When the real situation becomes clear to Dr. Williams, as in time it must, we hope he will send us some more poems.

A Letter to the Editor

I just read your editorial statement in the December issue of the PARTISAN REVIEW. Upon completion I promptly consigned the issue to the garbage pail.

All additional numbers of the PARTISAN REVIEW sent to me will be relegated unopened to the same place.

When a 'Left' magazine in its

editorial statement attacks the Communist Party, as your magazine does, the hand of Trotskyism and its Fascist allies are clearly visible.

I am a class-conscious worker, Trotskyism and all it stands for is abhorrent to me. Remove my name from your mailing list and save me the nauseating experience of receiving any more copies of your vile publication.

Yours truly,

SOL RUBINSTEIN
New York City

P. S. I just noticed that my garbage pail regurgitated.

And Three More

Permit me to be one member of the Communist Party to congratulate you on a very distinguished editorial job on *PARTISAN REVIEW*. There has been a great need for a magazine free from organizational sterility and I hope it will have the great success it deserves.

I admire your purpose in putting it out and your courage in stating your principles.

Sincerely yours,

RONALD LANE LATIMER
New York City

I have just had the pleasure of reading through the first issue of the Review. I particularly like your Editorial Statement—in fact it is a classic understatement insofar as it refers to the bitterness and venom that the C.P. will heap upon you.

The cover suggests what the contents should be—P.R. (Proportional Representation). If you can achieve that in a literary and cultural magazine, devoted to a revolutionary ideal, you're going some. But—it's worth the try.

Sincerely,

BEN B. NAUMOFF
Labor Research Front
New York City

Nothing is more heartening to me than to see the rise of a more critical spirit when so many people are going without reflection into one of the extreme camps. It disturbs me especially because this new fanaticism is the rejection of

the scientific method that was just getting a foothold in other areas beside the exact sciences. . . . Your review deserves a large reading public. . . .

Sincerely,

FREDERICK REUSTLE
Van Myck Avenue
Congregational Church
Jamaica, N. Y.

First Issue Reactions

John Dos Passos: I'm very glad you are starting up the *PARTISAN REVIEW* again. Something is certainly needed to keep a little life in the left, which is rapidly merging with the American Legion. It won't be long now before the boys are selling Liberty Bonds and pinning the white feather on anybody who doesn't enlist for the next war for democracy.

Delmore Schwartz's story is dandy—and Macdonald's analysis of the *New Yorker* is real social criticism. Congratulations—and good luck.

Ignazio Silone: Je suis à présent très occupé par un grand travail (la continuation de *Bread and Wine*), mais sitôt j'aurai un peu de temps je vous enverrai quelque pour votre revue, pour laquelle je vous fais tous mes souhaits.

Louis M. Hacker: I want to commend you for the courage, intelligence and high literary qualities of the *PARTISAN REVIEW*. It serves a necessary function and I am sure it will win the support from intelligent people which it so richly deserves.

Edmund Wilson: I thought the first number of the Review was very good. The only thing wrong with it was the proof-reading, which you really ought to watch in the next issue.

Nathan Asch: I thought the first number of the Review was swell. . . . The reviews are the best in any American magazine. . . . Whoever wrote the comment at the end did a damned good job. I'd like to see this department enlarged, and doing what the *New Yorker* does, except dealing with life and not whimsy.

André Gide: Tous mes voeux de réussite pour la *PARTISAN REVIEW* dont votre letter m'apprend les projets auxquels je m'associe de tout cœur.